

Industrial Worker

JULY 1997

#1603, vol. 94 no. 6

\$1.00/75 p

EDUCATION ORGANIZATION EMANCIPATION

Solidarity can win Mersey dock strike

"The international dockers movement which has come to life during our dispute is now poised to deliver a very damaging blow to the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company," delegates returning from the 2nd International Dockworkers Conference in Montreal told the weekly mass meeting in Liverpool. "We don't want our union to cut across this opportunity with a shoddy deal to sabotage the international movement," declared international co-ordinator Terry Teague.

54 delegates from 5 continents, 17 countries, and 27 ports met for a week in a conference hosted by the Syndicat des Debardeurs (Dockers Union). Syndicat des Debardeurs president Michel Murray stated at the start that "employers seek the weak link of the chain, where they could benefit from casual, under-paid labour without protection... Our principle objective is to reinforce this chain, to plug all the breaks by which maritime employers could try to slip through to destroy the safety net of protection which the dockers have won in over 100 years of struggle. It must be timely to speak today more than ever of Liverpool!"

A rolling programme of industrial action aimed at winning the 21-month-old dispute was agreed, beginning with a worldwide stoppage of up to 24 hours depending on local circumstances and moving immediately to "a movement organised in series and relays, in accordance with the itineraries and destinations of the vessels of the shipping companies (Cast, ACL, Canmar...)" which continue to call in Liverpool.

The International Transportworkers Federation (ITF) had been invited to Montreal but declined to attend although many delegates represented ITF-affiliated unions. The ITF began its own dockers conference the next week, but refused to allow the Liverpool dockers to participate.

Many other potential and actual dockers' disputes are bubbling up around the world. Dockers everywhere are getting the message that it can happen to them.

The Liverpool stewards explained that Labour's election victory guaranteed nothing for their dispute: "Only if we take the lead, they may follow," as Terry Teague put it. The Montreal conference wrote to Tony Blair, concluding "this disgraceful hostage situation absolutely must come to an end."

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Detroit Newspaper Strike...

Only Direct Action Can Win

While the plug has been pulled on the Detroit newspaper strike, the picket line persists. The Detroit newspaper strike, now in its twentieth month, has become the Detroit newspaper lock-out. In mid-February word came down from the union brass that an offer of unconditional surrender was fast coming. And it did. Why would the 2,000 workers who have been striking for almost two years want to make an offer to return to work at pre-strike conditions still without a contract? Well, most of them didn't, but five out of six of the unions involved are non-democratic and don't accurately represent the wishes of the rank and file. Being on strike without permission from the internationals would mean an end to all of the resources that these organizations represent (strike benefits and legal representation, for example).

Gannet-Knight Ridder accepted the offer less than a week after it was made. The company plans on keeping all its scabs. To date, the company has only offered around

50 people their jobs back – or rather jobs period – one out of two of the formal offers would include demotions so severe that it is clear that they are creating a situation in which it would be impossible for anyone to accept the offered positions. If a return to work offer is rejected, it carries the same legal ramifications as officially quitting would. Not that any of this affects the 1,900 workers who have still not heard, and are not likely to hear, from the papers. The only thing that changes for them is the word used to describe their reality. "Strike" becomes "lock-out" – and you still don't have a job.

The union management is pursuing unfair labor practice complaints with the National Labor Relations Board. The hope here is that the NLRB will force the company to bring back any worker who hasn't been fired for picket line misconduct, and shell out back pay from the date that the unconditional surrender offer was made. Even if this plan is successful, it won't be much of a victory since it will allow the

company and the union to rid itself of the people who have been most active in this strike. The locked-out workers who have been fired are the people who have been most consistent and vehement in organizing to win. They are the people you see on the picket line.

However this isn't as alarming a possibility as it sounds, because it would still entail the government of the US coming down on the side of labor. There is no real precedent for this. From its inception, the union movement in this country began its demise, as it curtailed wildcat strikes and made worker/boss relationships a governable process. Legally, some people never get to strike (threat to national security), strikes can be called off by the government and picket line activity is strictly regulated. Companies can permanently replace their workers and the government plays a leading role every time a union is busted. So as weak a victory for labor as a government-forced rehiring might be, there is little reason to

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We Never Forget...

Stop Borders Books Union-Busting

Wobblies and other labor supporters picketed Borders outlets from Portland, Maine, to Santa Monica, California, June 15th, marking the one-year anniversary of the firing of IWW organizer Miriam Fried in a blatant attempt to intimidate workers in Borders stores across the country. Managers briefly locked the doors to the Boston Borders after protesters briefly occupied the store, filling the cavernous former bank building with chanting and drumming.

Borders, the second-largest bookstore chain in the United States (after Barnes & Noble), operates some 1,100 stores – most under the Borders, Brentano's and Waldenbooks names. Three Borders outlets have voted for union representation since the IWW's efforts to organize the Philadelphia store demonstrated that bookstore workers could be organized. Union organizing efforts continue at several other stores, though Borders' union-busting and intimidation have squelched efforts in many stores.

After more than six months, Borders has yet to reach a contract with workers at its Lincoln Park, Chicago, store, represented by the United Food and Commercial Workers. Borders management threatened to close that store shortly after the vote, rather than operate it under union conditions.

Meanwhile, while Borders continues flying its top executives and union-busting lawyers around the country to intimidate workers considering unionization, the bookstore chain is falling further and further behind Barnes & Noble. The IWW's boycott campaign has cost Borders thousands of customers, and millions of dollars in lost sales. And our efforts have made it clear to Borders that they cannot trample on workers' rights with impunity – that we will defend our fellow workers with direct action. An injury to one is an injury to all!

A dozen Wobs, Food Not Bombers and assorted supporters were out at the chain's flagship Ann Arbor store June 15. We passed out several hundred leaflets while FNB fed and entertainers entertained. Detroit Wobs also picketed the Dearborn Borders..



Alexis Buss of the IWW's Philadelphia General Membership Branch reads Miriam Fried's statement on the one-year anniversary of her firing for union organizing to supporters at a June 15 rally in front of the Boston Borders.

Two Wobblies (one of whom had joined just that day) were joined by the editorial staff of *The Pine Tree Progressive* to picket the Portland, Maine, store. These three young men were very good leafletters and were capable and articulate when asked to explain the boycott. Their solidarity was a big help. We had a great day, picketing for around three hours. Several customers left without going in. We also spoke with two

Borders employees who were very interested in hearing about the IWW. One older gent approached us saying he had been a Wobbly when he was in college. By the way his face lit up when he saw the IWW globe on one of our signs, it was obvious where his sympathies were. We handed out many copies of the *IW*, and many people expressed a real interest in the IWW and unionism.

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In This Issue...

**John Sweeney:
Middle-Class Hero**

Organizing in Africa

**Green or Orange, All
Bosses Are The Same**

'Global' Corporations

\$1.75 pence UK



INDUSTRIAL WORKER
103 West Michigan Avenue
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

ISSN 0019-8870



Periodicals Postage

PAID

Ypsilanti, MI
and additional
mailing offices

Address correction requested

Wobbly and Proud

I'd like to take time out to say how proud I am to be a Wobbly. When I was a kid, I read a book about the Wobblies and wished I could join. Thanks to a well-paced *IWW* by FW Pete Wilcox, I discovered that the *IWW* is still alive and kicking. I signed up the same day.

As a machinery repairman in a small shop, I treasure my *IWW* membership. The AFL-CIO couldn't care less about small shops. But of course, AFL-CIO only stands for Another Fucking Lie by a Capitalist Infiltrated Organization.

As a former miner I've seen all of the capitalist games and pratfalls. Let the bosses be damned!

In this capitalist society you've got to stretch your neck every day not to drown. After ten years in mines, cotton gins, the army, driving trucks and now repairing machinery, I'm sick and tired of this shitty system. I was already sick of it nine years ago. Like I tell the guys in the shop: If you don't want to organize, don't complain.

Sign me Wobbly and proud!

Kevan Perry, X346292, Honolulu

Non-thinking faddism

Marie Antoinette, during the French Revolution, told the masses to eat cake, insensitive to the fact that they did not have bread.

The rush to computerize provides us with a somewhat similar attitude. In the

Job Branch= 5 or more members in workplace
GMB=General Membership Branch
IU=Industrial Union Del=Delegate
GOC= Organizing Committee.

IU 330: Building Construction Workers
IU 450: Print & Publishing House Workers
IU 460: Food Processing Workers
IU 510: Marine Transport Workers
IU 610: Health Service Workers
IU 620: Education Workers
IU 630: Entertainment Workers
IU 660: General Distribution Workers
IU 670: Public Service Workers

Industrial Worker

THE VOICE OF REVOLUTIONARY UNIONISM

Industrial Workers of the World
103 West Michigan Avenue
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197 USA
313/483-3548 iww@igc.apc.org

General Secretary-Treasurer:
Fred Chase

General Executive Board:
Monica Berini, Kevin Brandstatter,
Michael D'Amore, Liam Flynn, Penny
Pixler, Mike Reinsboro, Bob Tibbs Jr.

Articles should be submitted to:

Jon Bekken, editor
101 Western Avenue #15
Cambridge MA 02139 USA
jbekken@igc.apc.org

Printed by Teamsters union labor
Online Edition: <http://iww.org/~iww/>

ISSN 0019-8870 Official monthly
publication of the Industrial Workers
of the World. Periodicals Postage Paid
Ypsilanti MI & other mailing offices.
Postmaster: send address changes to:
Industrial Worker, 103 West Michigan,
Ypsilanti MI 48197.

Individual Subscriptions \$15
Library Subscriptions \$20/year
(Member sub included in dues)

Articles not so designated do not
represent the official position of the
IWW. Donations welcome.

Press Date: June 17, 1997

Readers' Soapbox

May edition of the *Industrial Worker*, several articles list only a computer address.

If we are to be leaders of the working class, the disenfranchised and the powerless, we need to have assumptions different from the ruling or controlling classes or forces, however you want to define them. Therefore, for radical activists to assume that everyone has a computer is a class statement (probably unconscious).

I would urge that all articles include the computer information, but also include an address and a telephone number.

Elitism and non-thinking faddism ill becomes the people's tradition of the *IWW*.
Stanley Rosen

Slave labor in U.S. prisons

Every time I read about sweatshops in Vietnam, I can't help but compare them to prisons (slave labor) in the States.

I work in the furniture factory here [in jail], where I help build tables, chairs, desks, etc. I get paid 65 cents a day and have no rights. Then the Department of Corruption sends this furniture to outside companies for a major profit.

Last month I refused to work. As a result my stay here has been extended for three months. So as a result they have forced me to rely on minor acts of monkey wrenching to strike back at the system.

Resist to Exist.

[name withheld]

New subscriber

I am writing to ask for a subscription to the *Industrial Worker*. I have decided that I should support your work instead of borrowing it from friends. I get more out of your monthly newspaper than I get out of a month's time of the 6 o'clock news.

Charles Sontag

Sexist language?

Dear Fellow Worker Editor,

I have been reading the *Industrial Worker* for years and have noticed that you never use the appellation "Sister Worker." Are you some sort of sexist, or what's the story?

Gerald Umansky

When Big Bill Haywood opened the founding convention of the *IWW*, he wel-

comed the delegates as "fellow workers" – deliberately avoiding the still commonly used "brothers" in recognition of the women delegates present, and the role that women workers would necessarily play in any organization that aspires to organize our class into One Big Union capable of dumping the bosses off our backs. Only in very recent years has anyone suggested that the term "fellow worker" is itself gender-specific, perhaps reflecting the linguistic confusion that has led some dictionaries to abandon the distinction between bi-weekly and semi-weekly. Your editor has little patience for this sort of sloppy usage, in which words lose their meanings or acquire completely contradictory meanings.

Webster's defines a fellow as "1) an associate, 2) one of the same rank; equal." Webster adds that fellow can be used as an adjective for "having the same position... associated [fellow worker]." The New Collegiate defines fellow as "comrade, associate; 2) an equal in rank, power or character; 3) a member of a group having common characteristics..." Earlier today I happened to be on the campus of a local women's college and noticed a sign welcoming "Sister Fellows." The word "fellow" is not gender-specific. Let's not abandon a perfectly fine word reflecting our commonality.

I.W.W. DIRECTORY

AUSTRALIA

NEW SOUTH WALES

Sydney Regional *IWW*– PO Box 241, Surrey Hills 2010

BRITISH ISLES

IWW Regional Organising Committee– 75 Humberstone Gate, Leicester LE1 4WB, tel no 0116-266-1835. For contacts throughout the British Isles write or phone this office.

ENGLAND

Swindon Region GMB & Research Councils IU 620 group–del: Kevin Brandstatter, 9 Omdurman Street, Swindon SN2 1HA, 01793-610707
General Distribution Workers IU660 and Bournemouth *IWW*– Ray Carr, Flat 2, 35 Parkwood Rd., Boscombe, Dorset BH5 2BS

SCOTLAND

Stevenson College IU 620 Branch– Rm 3.05 Bankhead Avenue, Sighthill, Edinburgh

CANADA

MANITOBA

Winnipeg GMB– B. Mackay, PO Box 3204, GNPO, R3C 4E7

ONTARIO

Ottawa GMB– 388 1/2 Kent, K2P 2A9. 613/231-2922 <bh295@freenet.carleton.ca>
Toronto Group– Joe Chang, 137 Roncesvalles Suite 208, M6R 2L2 416/539-0780. Meets 1st Thurs 7 pm; phone for location.

GERMANY

Del.– Daniel Zimmermann, Atroper Strasse 22, D-47226 Duisburg-Rheinhausen. 02065-56 446

WEST AFRICA

Sierra Leone– Del.: Bright Chikezi, 22 Wellington Street, Freetown.

UNITED STATES

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles GMB– Meets 2nd, 4th Sundays. For location: 213/368-4604 or 735-8648. Andrew Willett 1724 Westmoreland Blvd., LA 90006.
Mendocino– Bill Meyers, del. 707/884-1818.
San Diego Group– PO Box 907, 92112-0907.
Santa Cruz GMB– PO Box 534, 95061
IU450 New Earth Press Job Shop– 1921 Ashby Berkeley 94703 510/549-0176
San Francisco Bay Area GMB– PO Box 40485, S.F. 94140. Berkeley office and IU 670 Berkeley Recycling Center Job Branch: 3124 Shattuck Ave., 94705, 510/649-0414. IU 620 Berkeley Worms: 504 Eshleman UC Berkeley 94703 510/643-0440. IU 620 File 13 Recycling Job Shop: 504 Eshleman, 510/642-4895.
San Francisco office: Redstone Building, 2940 16th St. (at Capp), #216-2, San Francisco 94103 415/863-WOBS e-mail: staff@iww.org

COLORADO

IU450 P&L Printing Job Shop– 2298 Clay,

Denver 80211. 303/433-1852

GEORGIA

Atlanta Group– George Nikas, 11 Clarendon Pl., Avondale Estates 30002. gnikas@unix.cc.emory.edu

HAWAII

O'ahu GMB– PO Box 11928, Honolulu 96828; 808/247-8584; wilcox@uhunix.uhcc.hawaii.edu
Honaunau Group– POB 868, Honaunau 96726.

ILLINOIS

Chicago GMB– 1340 W Irving Park Road #287 60613. 312/549-5045. Meets 2nd Friday 7 pm (call for location).

KANSAS

Wichita– 1559 N Market, 67214.

MARYLAND

Baltimore GMB– Del. Rafi Bey, PO Box 8882, 21224-0882. 410/367-3024

MASSACHUSETTS

IU630 GOC– Jim Barclay, 75A Elm St. Worcester 01609
Boston Area GMB & Education Workers IU 620– PO Box 391724, Cambridge 02139. del: Steve Kellerman 617/469-5162 Meets 2nd Sunday of each month at 7 p.m, Lucy Parsons Center, Central Square, Cambridge.
Pioneer Valley Group– PO Box 154, Northampton 01061, e-mail: pviww@iww.org del: Mike D'Amore 413/549-1143

MICHIGAN

Huron Valley GMB– 103 W. Michigan Ave., Ypsilanti 48197. 313/483-3548
Detroit *IWW*– Trumbull Theatre, 4208 Trumbull 48208. 313/832-4074

IU630 Workers Stories Workers Lives Job Shop– Albert Parsons 313/769-0695
IU670 Ann Arbor Tenants Union Job Shop– 4001 Michigan Union, Ann Arbor 48109. 313/763-6876.

MINNESOTA

Duluth GMB– 206 W. 4th St. #216, Duluth 55806 218/723-7887.
Minneapolis-St. Paul– 7315 Dupont Ave. S., Richfield 55423-3025. 612/869-4139.

MISSOURI

St. Louis GMB– c/o Bob Tibbs, Jr., 10072 Hedge Dr., St. Louis 63137. 314/868-1472

MONTANA

Butte– Mark Ross, PO Box 233, 59703. 406/782-4465

NEW JERSEY

Cape May County GMB & Building Construction Workers IU 330– c/o Richard Neill, POB 261, Cape May Court House 08210.

NEW YORK

Capital District Group– POB 74, Altamont 12009. 518/861-5627.
Rochester– Del: Ric Garren, 716/385-6681.
NYC GMB– Del: Wade Rawluk, 5610 Nether-

land Ave #4D, Bronx 10471. 718/796-3671.
Rochelle Semel, RD 1 Box 158-B, Hartwick 13348. 607/293-6489.

IU670 Socialist Party Natl Office Job Shop– 516 W. 25th St. #404, NYC 10001. 212/691-0776

NORTH CAROLINA

Asheville– BB&T Building Suite G130, Asheville 28801 704/285-9521.

OREGON

Eugene GMB – c/o Rick George, 1840 W. 10th Ave., 97402 email: rickg@efn.org
Portland GMB and Building Construction Workers IU 330 Organizing Committee– POB 15005, 97293-5005. email: mmiller@orednet.org 503/650-7187

PENNSYLVANIA

Lehigh Valley GMB– POB 4133 Bethlehem 18018 610/515-0181. Del: Trish D'Amore 434-0128. <len.flank@node99.com> Lancaster: POB 796, Lancaster 17608.
Philadelphia GMB– 4722 Baltimore Ave. 19143. phillyiww@iww.org Meets on the third Sunday of every month at 4:00pm at A Space, 4722 Baltimore Ave. Del: Alexis Buss 215/724-1925

SOUTH CAROLINA

IU450 Harbinger Publications Job Shop– Merll Truesdale, del., 18 Bluff Rd. Columbia 29201. 803/254-9398

TENNESSEE

Memphis– c/o Dennis Henke, 3461 Douglass, Memphis 38111 901/458-9907.

TEXAS

Lucy Parsons Group– c/o Joshua Freeze, 1309 Norwalk Apt. C, Austin 78703.
Houston Group– PO Box 981101, 77098.
Rio Grande– Del.: Erik Carlos Toren, 1018 S 12th Ave., Edinburgh 78539-5606 210/381-6786

UTAH

Salt Lake Branch– POB 520514, Salt Lake City 84152-0514. 801/296-7196 slcgbm@iww.org

VERMONT

Burlington Branch– c/o Thomas Jordan or Deborah Ormsbee, POB 1004, Williston 05495. 802/482-4601 or 863-0571 nfnena@igc.apc.org

WASHINGTON

IU460 Fairhaven Co-op Flour Mill Job Shop– 1115 Railroad Ave. Bellingham 98225.
Industrial Transportation Project– Arthur Miller, POB 5464, Tacoma 98415-0464
Olympia– PO Box 2775, 98507. 360/753-5919.
Puget Sound GMB– P.O. Box 4814 Seattle 98104-0814 206/935-9012

WISCONSIN

IU450 Lakeside Press Job Shop– 1334 Williamson, Madison 53703 608/255-1800.
Madison GMB– c/Lakeside Del: Jerry Chernow

WYOMING

Jackson– Teton Jack Langan, del., POB 4056, 89001. 307/733-4553

Fighting the grave robbers

Pacific Northwest Wobs are engaged in a struggle with the Centralia Union Mural Project over the Project's efforts to hijack the IWW's legacy for partisan objectives. The Project, dominated by local business owners and labor bureaucrats, claims they want to create a mural in Centralia, Washington, commemorating the Wobbly martyrs slain and imprisoned by Centralia's employing class in the massacre of 1919. Although all of the martyrs were Wobblies, there have been repeated attacks on the IWW's right to participate in meetings, be involved in the planning of the Mural, and to speak. Indeed, one speaker went so far as to claim the IWW does not exist!

The Mural Project's June 8 meeting opened with a tape recording of FW Eugene Barnett, a dual-card IWW/UMW worker and one of the Wobs jailed after the massacre (a real fire-eating old-timer). When FW Miller proposed a motion that IWW members not be excluded from speaking under Project auspices, co-chair Bill Henry (AFL Operating Engineers Local business agent) blocked consideration, insulting those who objected and telling them to leave.

Even some of the businessmen involved seem more sympathetic to the IWW than the fakers running the show. And we've shown that Wobs can't be ordered out or ignored. Next time — assuming a fair and democratic process is put in place — we'll have the opportunity to show them how effective and co-operative Wobs are at their best.

Letters protesting the attempts to shut Wobs out of the planning process should be sent to the Centralia Union Mural Project, TESC Labor Education Center, Olympia WA 98505.

Lining 'em up in Portland, Oregon

The IWW in Portland, Oregon, continues to be quite active. The GMB continues to meet weekly. Restaurant workers have met sporadically.

Currently Musicians and Entertainers Union 630 have started to meet to plan organizing. The response has been good and a solid core group has been formed. Several position papers have been written and are available either by post or on the Web on the IU 630 web page at www.teleport.com/~obu/630.html.

Local Wobs have started a Portland IWW web page, featuring many organizing papers, a daily news page and home pages for Building Construction workers IU330, Entertainers IU 630 and Restaurant Workers IU 640. The URL is www.teleport.com/~obu — CA Canny

Around Our Union

Wobs Hit Borders Stockholder Meet

As part of the ongoing struggle with Borders, seven of us, mostly Wobs, but with solid representation from the Workers Solidarity Alliance and the Atlantic Anarchist Circle, converged on the Regency Hotel on Manhattan's Upper East Side. The purpose of the meeting, for the corporate executives of Borders, was to vote on resolutions and to present the state of the corporation; whereas our intent was to give the shareholders of Borders Group, Inc. a piece of the union's mind. Although they did not recant their contemptible positions, it went pretty well.

At 8:30 a.m., on our way to the meeting, we bumped into CEO Robert DiRomulado and other corporate chiefs in the elevator. Unaware that he and the other suits were surrounded by a half dozen syndicalists, DiRomulado asked when he surmised that we too were there for the shareholders meeting. "Which store are you from?" "Twenty-one," replied Fellow Worker Buss. That brief but significant statement apprised him of the nature of our visit. Store #21 is the one in Philadelphia, where Wobbly organizer Miriam Fried was fired in retaliation for her union activism.

DiRomulado quickly spread the word that we were there for purposes other than complacent listening to stockholder information. This news triggered many unfriendly responses from the others at the meeting. He said to the lady at the registration table, "Call security in case there's trouble, and make sure they're shareholders." As we showed her our proxy vote forms one at a time, three or four soldierly looking men materialized, to quell any possible trouble.

We walked inside the meeting room, where twenty corporate types waited for the presentation. Almost all of them were they very same people we were there to complain about, including Mark Shiffman from the union-busting law firm of Jackson & Lewis, Borders Books & Music President Richard Flanagan, Human Resources Director Ann Kubek, and even the founding owner from

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IWW organizers with Wobbly banner and corporate jet in hand...

No union at Snyder's pretzels

On June 6th, 1997, workers at Snyder's of Hanover, a pretzel and chip factory, voted by a more than two to one margin to decertify UFCW Local 72, a union which had misrepresented them for over twenty years. The IWW intervened in the election, looking to rekindle the flame of unionism in the last few weeks before the vote. The climate of fear in a workplace created by the anti-union campaigning of bosses is usually bad enough to crush organizing efforts. Add in to the mix the past history of a fake union totally unresponsive to the concerns of its rank and file members. We must learn from this campaign and plan for the future, as unfortunately, there are a lot of fake unions out there.

While on house calls, IWW members had to clearly announce that we were not the UFCW before many would even talk to us. The team that went on house calls decided to favor talking to "no" votes — the people who we were sure would side with the company because of their disillusionment with their current union. This was a thankless but urgently necessary task. When we did encounter UFCW supporters we provided them with information on how to make a democratic union and urged them to help turn no votes into union votes by taking information we provided into the plant with them.

In our first few days in Hanover, PA, we were excited to find that perhaps there was still hope for a core group of pro-union die-hards that would be able to carry the torch no matter how the vote went. The few days leading up to the campaign proved our opti-

mism to be ill-founded. Workers hid in their homes, watching us knock at their doors through their curtains. These same workers went to the NLRB voting booth in isolation, voting no union in a desperate attempt to preserve their jobs and to stop the UFCW from stealing their hard-earned money out of their paycheck every week.

Believing that things could get worse with no union was unfathomable to these workers. Grievances would be unilaterally dismissed as shop stewards and union officials consistently sided with management and justified their behavior. It felt like we were speaking an entirely unknown language when we discussed our hopes for changing the current state of the plant and organizing from the shop floor for better pay and working conditions. The time frame for the election dictated by the NLRB was too short for our efforts to have a solid impact this time around.

We still hold out the hope that the IWW can help these workers. A commitment has been made by us to defend any worker who is threatened by management for speaking out for workers' rights. We will still be encouraging workers to organize in solidarity for the good of all. We will not allow Snyder's management to trample upon the rights of its employees without a fight. If the UFCW had this same attitude, they would still be representing these workers. For the sake of the UFCW's 1.3 million other members, let's hope we are not the only union learning from this campaign.

— Alexis Buss

Will labor save a St. Louis hospital?

Four St. Louis labor leaders stop into a TV studio. They are here for a taping of "Labor Vision," a local cable show staffed mostly by St. Louis Wobs. The topic is the Regional Medical Center, a hospital for the indigent which closed May 9. They proposed a plan to save the institution.

The plan, worked out by nurse and labor organizer Mike O'Niel, is as follows: 1) The employees of Regional would accept unionization, 2) Once unionized, patients with union health insurance plans would patronize the hospital. This, in turn, would generate a stream of revenue allowing the hospital to continue its services to the poor.

So what's really going on? The answer lies in the seething unrest in St. Louis hospitals over the past few years — particularly among nurses. The nursing profession was created in the 19th century to manage hospitals. Hospitals are like factories. The people who work in them are paid to operate the "means of production" owned by someone else. Nurses were taught that however poorly paid they were, they were somehow "better" than other hospital workers.

When corporate downsizing hit American hospitals, it hit nurses hard. The bosses broke all their promises about job tenure and all their talk of nurses being special. Nurses held organizing meetings all around

the St. Louis area. The AFL unions finally took note — if only private hospitals in St. Louis could be organized! But the bosses have always been able to frustrate organizing drives.

Regional opened in 1985 as a hospital for the indigent. By 1996, the hospital hit financial trouble. And in January of 1997, St. Louis privatized indigent care and turned it over to a cartel of private hospitals. On May 9, Regional closed its doors.

Labor leaders propose making Regional the first unionized private hospital in St. Louis. But would it spread? Ten percent of working people in St. Louis are in the health care industry, so the basis for widespread unionization is here. But many work in dispersed doctors' offices, clinics and outpatient operations. The unanswered question is if the effort will be narrowed into craft unionism or strengthened across the industry.

Scab Attacks Seattle Wobs

Several Lincoln Park Mini Mart strikers and supporters are receiving harrassing phone calls from scab John O'Conner since the strike ended. He has followed Wobblies home and threatened one's 9-year-old son. O'Conner also has called FW Bilow's present employer trying to get her fired.

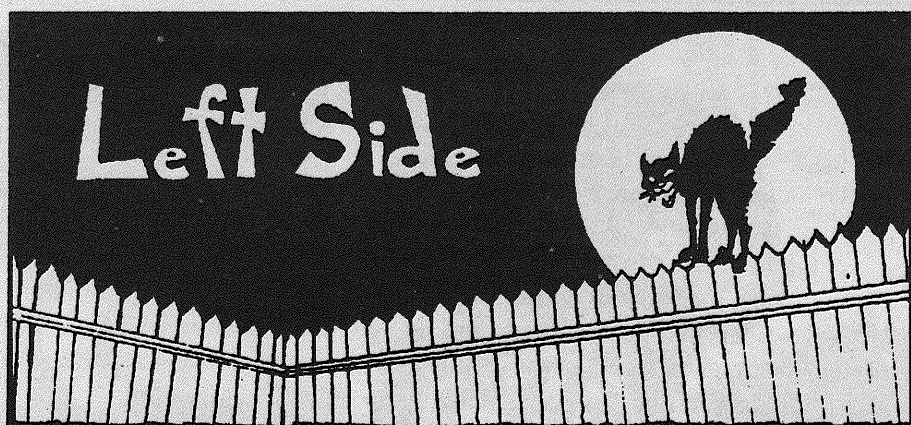
PREAMBLE TO THE IWW CONSTITUTION

The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of the working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things of life. **Between these two classes** a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organize as a class, take possession of the means of production, abolish the wage system, and live in harmony with the Earth.

We find that the centering of the management of industries into fewer and fewer hands makes the trade unions unable to cope with the ever-growing power of the employing class. The trade unions foster a state of affairs which allows one set of workers to be pitted against another set of workers in the same industry, thereby helping defeat one another in wage wars. Moreover, the trade unions aid the employing class to mislead the workers into the belief that the working class have interests in common with their employers.

These conditions can be changed and the interests of the working class upheld only by an organization formed in such a way that all members in any one industry, or in all industries if necessary, cease work whenever a strike or lockout is on in any department thereof, thus making an injury to one an injury to all.

Instead of the conservative motto, "A fair day's wage for a fair day's work," we must inscribe on our banner the revolutionary watchword, "Abolition of the wage system." **It is the historic mission of the working class to do away with capitalism.** The army of production must be organized, not only for everyday struggle with the capitalists, but also to carry on production when capitalism shall have been overthrown. By organizing industrially we are forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old.



"Amtrak's Survival at Stake." So read the sheet of paper laying on our reserved coast seats as we boarded the train for our little trek out West. My wife and I happened to have a little extra moola on hand so what could be a better way of enjoying Chicago springtime than taking ourselves a little trip. The little yellow sheet of paper with the alarming headline was an appeal for train riders to appeal to their friendly politicians to urge the railroads from further discontinuing more passenger lines. Knowing to whose whip the polities really jump to, yours truly set this paper to the side, but on second thought kept to facilitate passing on some of his wisdom to the readership of this stalwart little periodical.

The particular route on which we were riding was, in fact, due to be discontinued within a few days after arriving at our destination. Fortunately we booked a different route for our return trip to see some different landscape. There has been a steady discontinuing of railroad runs around Freedomland, particularly small local runs. Because Amtrak uses the rail right-of-ways that now belong to the freight shippers, merchandise takes priority over people. Many times within a run the passenger train must pull off to a siding in order to let a freight train go by. That results in most passenger runs arriving at their destination considerably behind schedule which can cause considerable inconvenience to those riders who must make connections to travel further on, particularly those who get off at smaller locations where the depots are closed down for the day or night.

In larger facilities like Chicago, Amtrak will provide for overnight facilities so connections can be made the following day. Amtrak used to provide for a free meal in the dining car as compensation, but on this latest run they only offered a free soda or coffee. In most European countries and other parts of the world, there has been increased improvement in passenger rail travel, but it is all the more ironic that here what has been touted to us as the richest country on Earth, that passenger rail service has been steadily deteriorating. In other parts of the world passenger lines are operated completely separate from freight lines to ensure the best and speediest of service but such is far from being the case here in Freedomland.

Not only that but in other countries, western Europe in particular have developed an excellent interurban service between the smaller towns. Here passenger facilities within the trains have been deteriorating as well. I have seen larger jail cells than the sleeping compartments on these trains, including the de luxe sleeping compartments. Yours truly much prefers to catch his occasional winks on the coach seats. The rest room facilities have obviously been designed by the same people who design torture chambers. These facilities are virtually impossible for those who happen to be of unusual girth, of which there are a reasonable number here in Freedomland.

Not only that, but your scribe is left with the nagging suspicion that Amtrak is slyly sabotaging itself, along with the collusion of the freight lines. It is quite obvious that those in high places, like the spoiled brat of a couple of centuries earlier who said "Let the eat cake," feel that if people want to go places that somehow cannot be appreciated from several thousand feet up nor is he interested in spewing more carbon monoxide in that scenic splendor.

Unfortunately, within all this scenic splendor one can also see whole mountainsides denuded of trees with nothing but stumps to remind one of what was once there, but it is also a good lesson on the workings of the economic system that we live under. This great continent that supported millions of people 500 years ago, as well as innumerable hosts of four-legged and two-winged along with the denizens of the waters, is becoming a desolate desert with the introduction of a society where too many decisions affecting far too many lives are being made by far too few of our number.

Some years ago there was a movie shown that was based on one of Ray Bradbury's short stories, "Fahrenheit 451," the title referring to the temperature at which paper starts to burn. It was a story projected into the future when books were illegal and there were special police details that would look for secret libraries or stashes of hidden books and set them on fire.

I was reminded of Ray Bradbury's story the other day when I received a copy of a letter a colleague of mine had sent to one of the local newspapers. One of the local branch public libraries on the north side of Chicago had been shut down with only one week's notice to the staff of that library and no notice whatsoever to the community residents where the library is located. The community residents had neither time nor opportunity to voice their sentiments over the closing. The current trend is to have fewer and larger libraries that would be regional instead of local.

The local library is the single most important community resource for working people with children. It is one of the few places for the kids to go to read and learn to educate themselves after school and before their parents come home. Learning to use their local library, they can have ready access to the larger regional libraries. These regional libraries, which are less associated with the communities, do not perform certain functions as effectively as the community walk-to library whose staff get to know their regulars and will take the time to give individual attention to those young people who may not be familiar with the classification system. The local library is also a safer environment for kids than the streets in many neighborhoods.

With all of the money being spent on cruise missiles and feeding rotten politicians in other parts of the globe, why can't the exorbitant taxes that the Freedomland working-stiff has to pay be used to help make a little brighter life for their kids. In fact it is in working-class neighborhoods, where these libraries are being axed. Those whose kids are destined to be our future manipulators will not be lacking in opportunities for educating themselves.

Voters of the World, stay away from the polls and do something else for a change. You have nothing to lose but your politicians!

— C.C. Redcloud

Do Workers Have Rights?

When workers struck the Domsey Fiber Corporation in Brooklyn in 1989 to protest the firing of several workers for union organizing, the boss called the mostly Haitian workers "monkeys" and other racial epithets. When workers called off the strike to return to work, the boss delayed rehiring them, and subjected the few who did get their jobs back to humiliating conditions and even physical assaults. Four years ago, Domsey was ordered to pay workers more than \$2 million in back pay by the Court of Appeals. But while the court case is over and Domsey is rolling in profits, the workers have yet to see a dime. It seems the National Labor Relations Board simply can't be bothered to collect the money...

Meanwhile, General Electric boss John Welch — who 'earned' \$6.3 million last year, and another \$24 mill in stock options — doesn't see why workers would want unions. "We don't need some third party to give people voice and dignity," Welch said. "We are the best-prepared company in the world to take a strike." *Boston Globe* business columnist Robert Jordan suggests that management "give some consideration to the fact that GE's executives attained their wealth the old-fashioned way — the workers earned it for them."

Capitalism Kills

Digging through the pile of papers on my desk, I came across a clipping from a University of Chicago professor who professes to be mystified by a very simple fact: the rich and famous are disgustingly healthy, while the poor are more likely to die young. In the army sergeants have more heart attacks than generals; blue-collar workers get sick more often and sicker than those with some control over their work lives. "With each little step down on the educational, occupational and income ladders comes an increased risk of headaches, varicose veins, hypertension, sleepless nights, emotional distress, heart disease, schizophrenia, and an early visit to the grave."

It's not lifestyle, the good doctor says, nor access to medical care (might too many workers be stuck with the second-rate services provided by my health care provider?). He is reduced to suggesting karma or genes. The more sensible idea that being oppressed and boss-ridden is simply bad for you seems never to have crossed his mind...

Meanwhile, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees is battling Florida's plans to rid its pension plan of \$825 million in tobacco stocks, insisting that investment decisions should be made solely on rate of return.

The Reign of Money

This issue is getting to press a bit later than usual, and in far more hectic circumstances. In addition to the ordinary pressures of work, pulling together our Borders action (Borders will not soon forget the scores of angry picketers storming its bank-turned-chain store), and such, I've been reading zoning manuals and planning documents. I live in one of the very few remaining mixed-income neighborhoods in Cambridge, and the capitalists who own the real estate around here are determined to chase the working folks out.

Right now, a developer is trying to demolish four buildings and replace them with a shopping mall/luxury apartment complex. In a sane society they would simply be laughed at. They want to relocate city buses, further clog an already impassable intersection, and destroy several local eateries, independent clothing stores (which they hope to replace with a Gap, the 10-minute walk to the closest one being intolerable), and the progressive bookstore/center where the local IWW branch holds its meetings. Their

only justification for this orgy of destruction is that they can make more money.

In the meantime, they would destroy the social fabric of the community and remove the resources upon which people depend for their survival. And the project would have a ripple effect, raising rents throughout the district (already soaring after rent control was abolished).

It's an interesting struggle. Police spy on our meetings, explaining that they're worried about violence. They don't go to the developer's meetings, where the destruction is being planned. Property owners are

invited to meetings about the project, but not the tenants and residents whose lives will be affected. The decision-making

boards are stacked with business interests. Frankly, it's a rigged process. But that doesn't mean we're going to stand by and watch them destroy our community.

One of the businesses the developer has floated as a prospective tenant in the shopping mall is Borders Books. That would certainly make picketing convenient...

Natural Disasters

A fellow worker sends in an invoice from Delta Power Tools, which lists in its fine print a wide range of catastrophes which excuse the company from meeting its obligations. Leading off the list is "labor troubles." "Here you have it, straight from the horse's mouth!" the fellow worker notes. "Unions are worse for employers than fires, floods and hostilities! Notice labor troubles are listed first! So don't start fires, accidents, floods or hostilities — **Organize!**"

Voluntary Slavery

Another clipping, this from the April 27 *New York Times Magazine*, reports on New York City executives who are willing to pay good money to be bossed about and humiliated (apparently the thought of going to work for themselves never occurred). More than 70 boss types responded to an advertisement seeking volunteers to be bossed around for the fun of it (apparently they haven't read the good doctor's report).

On the one hand this is good news — come The Revolution we can simply order the bosses to do the dirty work, secure in the knowledge that they actually enjoy it (at least in small doses). But it does raise questions about the sanity of those running our economic system. Or perhaps it answers them. Anyone for a change of management?

The AFL begs these parasites to give us working-stiffs a fair break. The IWW has always preferred stronger medicine. Remember, You don't need the boss — the boss needs you!

— Jon Bekken

May Day: Our Holiday

Rank-and-file activists in Canadian Auto Workers Local 199 are pressing to bring a resolution to the 1997 CAW Convention calling upon the union to make May Day a paid holiday:

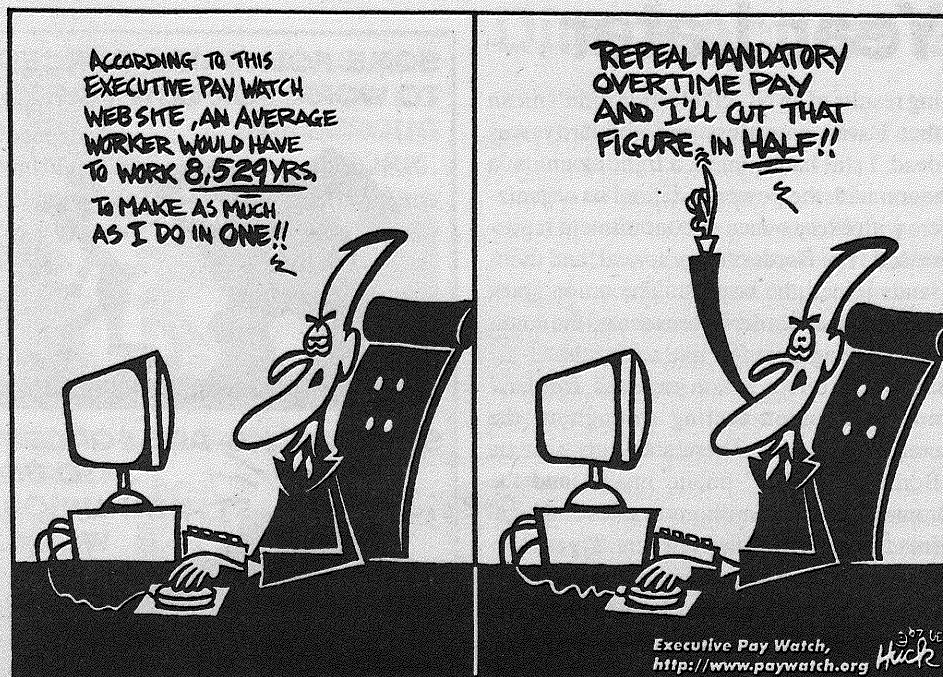
Whereas May 1st has been recognized around the world for over a century as a day in which workers celebrate their achievements and struggles for a better world and,

Whereas the celebration of May 1st raises the consciousness of workers concerning the need for a militant, multi-national fightback against the global corporate agenda and,

Whereas the May 1st holiday originated in North America but is neither properly appreciated nor officially recognized in either Canada or the U.S.,

Therefore, be it resolved that the CAW support having May 1 officially declared a Canada-wide public holiday and demand, as a matter of CAW policy, that the employers we collectively bargain with give our members a paid holiday on May 1.





Time for the 4 Hour Day

In the year 1886 in the city of Chicago, the people who were daily forced to labor from dusk till dawn, so that their families might live a subsistence existence did not go to work. Instead they gathered in the streets of that fair city in order to march together in a parade to demand that the length of the working day be reduced to 8 hours.

One hundred and ten years later people are still working the same number of hours and more just to make a living in the what is regularly referred to as the wealthiest country in the world. After all these years, an industrial revolution and the current information revolution, with all the technological advances we still have to spend almost a third of our lives laboring to make ends meet. Is it really necessary for us to put so much of our lives into the effort to have a decent existence? If so, why?

As wealth and power accumulates into the control of fewer and fewer individuals and corporations our lives become more and more insecure. Homeless people everywhere, unemployment and even slavery are everyday realities. The state, which many were used to relying on to act as a counterforce to the brutality of the so-called free market, is now working to take away what little security, real or imagined, working people had in life. We are expected to do without health care, a modestly secure retirement welfare for children and the neediest, education, etc., so that the competitive requirements of a neoliberal world system can be satisfied. Meanwhile the government subsidizes industries and the least needy out of a desire to pay back those who finance their elections and make a mockery of the concept of democracy.

This system has now created a social condition where 250 or so billionaires have a greater annual income than half the population of the earth. It is time that this wealth

is redistributed to the people who create it through their labor and away from those who hoard it because they have the power to do so.

One of the simplest ways of accomplishing this in a peaceful way is to reduce the length of the working day to four hours with no reduction in pay. It's an idea whose time has come! Of course creativity and resourcefulness are to be encouraged, any ideas on how to screw the greedy out of all this stolen wealth should become part of the May Day festivities. Getting rid of things like the state, government, rent, banks, capitalists, corporations, interest and free trade should all become targets of the festival for life. Artists, musicians and anyone else with ideas of expressing humanities need to rid itself of these and any other manifestations of the mindless mass consuming hyperreality we are forced to exist in, should start doing so now in preparation for May Day.

We owe it to ourselves and the future generations to stop the neo-liberal plunder of our lives and the planet. Another thirty years of the corporate state and its free trade laissez-faire economics and politics of greed and there may be nothing to leave to the children of the future. Resisting the culture of work and consumption is becoming a matter of life and death for every living thing on the planet. So how about it?

Where ever you may be on May 1st 1998 be sure it is not at work — get out in the street, park, city or town with your friends, neighbors, relatives and celebrate all the good things in life and how much more time we will have to enjoy them with only four hours of work without a reduction in pay. It can be a start to figuring out how to replace the society of wage slavery and mass consumption with one of freedom and life for all beings

— Jay Brophy

Letter: Genocide Texas Style

Howdy and revolutionary greetings to you from the Texas Gulag. I've been a prisoner here for eight years, living about 100 yards from the Texas death house the whole time.

The state of Texas stepped up its rate of executions this year. Already, 20 people have been put to death. The death toll is expected to reach 60 by year's end. In 1998, the state plans to execute someone on each working day!

People opposed to state murder as a viable solution to social problems protest outside the Huntsville Wall Unit when the state's murders occur. Most notable of these antideath penalty groups is the Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty. Terry Washington was put to death even though he was determined to be functionally retarded. The thing he had going for him is that at his execution he wasn't aware of

what was happening to him. The next day Kenneth Gentry was put to death and he proclaimed his innocence till the end. Shortly before his execution a man came forth to confess to the crime. This held no sway with the courts of law and governor of Texas George Bush Jr. would not even grant a one-day stay of execution to look into the matter. It appears Governor Bush, son of CIA man ex-Prez Bush had a dinner engagement with his rich buddies and couldn't be bothered with such trivialities as a man's life or justice. So while the good Governor dined, an innocent man was put to death.

This is not the first such incident of such a person being murdered by the state after exonerating evidence had come to light. A couple of years ago a young Mexican man was executed even though evidence proving his innocence had been uncovered. The Supreme Court ruled that he had gotten a

This usually isn't exactly a tough job, just tedious at times with lots of repetitive data entry, correspondence and such. Most of the time it isn't very exciting. Still I usually enjoy the work, not because of some intrinsic value but because it's being done to further a cause I love. Every once in a while a day comes along which is pretty special. One such was Wednesday, May 29th. Thought I'd share it with you.

A fellow worker from Washington State called to tell me to disregard a letter coming in the mail. In our correspondence I had suggested that he join the IWW. He had written that he was pretty discouraged about the state of the world and needed to retreat for a while. Meanwhile he had thought it over and decided that he really couldn't do that. "I'll be taking you up on your offer to join."

A woman called from a local bookstore inquiring about membership for a print shop she's establishing. She knew of us because one of our fellow workers is employed at the bookstore.

from the desk of...

Alexis Buss called from Hanover PA to request that extra Industrial Workers be overnighted to her and the seven other Wobblies who were distributing them at the Snyder's Foods plant where we were on a decertification

ballot against the United Food and Commercial Workers. It seems that the workers were very enthused about the front page article on their situation. The Wobs distributing the papers were all volunteers. They did it because they believe in silly things like working class solidarity. We've since lost that election. But lessons were learned, solidarity was built, and the IWW was put on the map in one more community. After a year of "at will" employment, the workers may be ready for a serious look at the IWW.

Fellow Worker Bright Chikezie called from Freetown Sierra Leone. A lot of us had been very worried about him in light of the recent coup, killings and lootings. He's ok, although he says he lost practically everything he owns to the looting government soldiers. He seemed in good spirits. I guess when people are getting killed, getting looted is not so bad by comparison. He needs money, both to replace his lost possessions and to help with plane fare to attend the IWW General Assembly over Labor Day weekend in St. Louis. Calls to San Francisco and Seattle confirmed that fundraising is underway. In the U.S. it's being coordinated by the Seattle Branch. Money from the U.S. is being combined with that collected by Fellow Workers in the U.K. and forwarded from there. Bright's closing comment before he hurried home to beat the 10pm-10am curfew was "As long as the Union exists, I'm I.W.W.!"

In talking to Mark Johnson during the call to Seattle I learned of a performance there by FWs Elise Bryant of Ann Arbor and Anne Feeney of Pittsburgh. Seems that during the performance a scab from the mini-mart the IWW recently attempted to organize was outside with a picket sign berating the IWW. He was the one the NLRB refused to recognize as management. His vote cost us the NLRB election. Someone from Workers World got in his face and the scab was forced to beat a hasty retreat. The solidarity is appreciated.

A two-card Fellow Worker called. He worked at a supermarket under UFCW contract. (We seem destined to bump noses with those folks.) The Fellow Worker was a shop steward. (He's since moved on to greener pastures.) A worker at the supermarket with six years seniority was fired for a \$2.50 shortage. The UFCW is pursuing the grievance, but the workers wanted to do something immediate to express their solidarity. They're "allowed" to wear union buttons on the job. They planned to write the fired worker's name on their buttons. Hardly an act of terrorism. But I guess solidarity can be terrifying to some folks. The union business agent informed them there would be no solidarity actions. The Fellow Worker had earlier expressed awkwardness about publicizing his IWW membership. Sometimes we even have to convince ourselves that we're for real. I suggested that the IWW could set up a picket at the store. The workers inside wouldn't risk any problems with either the company or the union and the message of outrage over the firing could be made loud and clear. Lightbulb! "I hadn't thought of that! I'll check with the workers and get back to you." One more way that IWW membership can be useful to two-carders.

There were other check-in calls from workers around the country. The IWW is alive and very active. I sat at my desk plugging away at the data entry, feeling proud and useful to be connected in even such a mundane way with inspiring Wobs around the world. It was a good day.

See you on the picket line in Detroit where Wobs and AFL-CIO rank and filers will confront Gannett and Knight-Ridder at the plants against the wishes of the AFL-CIO bureaucrats who would rather see the struggle fade away after a polite parade.

—Fred Chase, General Secretary-Treasurer

fair trial and that justice was served by his murder.

Memorial Day saw an antideath penalty rally outside the Huntsville Walls Unit to remember four black men who were electrocuted on the same day back in 1925 when the state got its new electric chair. Songs by protesters such as "Texas killing always bad, seem like lately the state's gone mad" and chants of "Auschwitz, Buchenwald, Huntsville" could be heard.

Anyone who would like to protest the class biased and racist practice of state murder can call Governor Bush toll-free, yes folks, that's toll free 1-800-252-9600

— FW Glover, X344248

Industrial Worker Sustaining Fund

Tom Johnson, Newmarket NH	\$15
Leon MacLean, Phoenix AZ	5
Ben White, Monrovia CA	5
Thomas Martin, Dayton OH	10
Geoffrey Cobden, Weybridge VT	10
V. Lee, Tampa FL	30
Chaz Stoll, West Midlands U.K.	5
Kenneth N. Margaritis, Brooklyn NY	15

Utah Phillips Solidarity Fund

Ray Owen, Ortanna PA	\$50
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Thank you, fellow workers, for your generous support.

“The tremendous outpouring of support taught me that the disappointing results of an NLRB election didn't mean that I was powerless ... I still had a union, a fighting union, a union with the power to defend its organizers with every ounce of commitment it possessed.”

Boycott Borders...

continued from page 1

On June 15, Austin, Texas, had our first action at Borders Books. About 10 went in and spiked books with flyers about Miriam and unions. When the flyers were all used up and the managers were on to us anyway, we went outside to gather signs and our banner for the picket. A manager from the coffee shop came out and said he supported us. I went back and forth as to whether he was serious, but he did bring us a large cooler of water and cups. Then another too-hip manager came out. I think she is the one we got in a fight with last Labor Day when we went around giving pink slip to bosses, saying their services were no longer needed. Then the big cheese came out and besides being the head manager, she was an idiot. She asked us how we could do this, since Austin is so cool. Hip capitalists, they're the worst. I guess she meant Austin is a nice town, so we should be exploited quietly. Lay back and enjoy it, as Clayton Williams says.

Anyway we were about 15 people, with folks from Acción-Zapatista, Earth First! and the Austin Greens, as well as us Wobs of course. We picketed for about an hour and a half and were able to turn away some people. Unfortunately, Borders here is in the up-and-coming suburbs on the way north side, so we were dealing with the worst sort of new-money scum and many of them were not willing to make contact with us.

From time to time the big cheese would try to get us to leave, but we just ignored her. As people in our crowd started drifting away, we decided to go inside for one final onslaught and then leave all together. We went in and FW Jen began reading Miriam's statement. The rest of us handed out flyers to the audience for a music show about to start inside. She only got about a paragraph in before manager #2 began to usher her out physically. We made a big stink about book stores opposing free speech, and slowly made our way out while arguing at some volume with big cheese.

She followed us out and wanted our union card. I think she thought a union card was something like a business card. She wanted to talk to our leader, and we said we were all the leader. She said we were stupid and disorganized. But I gave her a copy of the basic IWW pamphlet anyway, although I later realized it was a Spanish copy.

Our numbers weren't enormous, but we were quite visible, and did turn away a number of people. Several others said they would not buy anything, and one young kid said he needed the book for a class, but that he would tell them he was only buying it because he had to. We feel that it was a success for our first picket as Wobs here.

— Joshua DeVries

Members of the Los Angeles IWW spent all afternoon leafleting and picketing in front of Borders Bookshops in Santa Monica. Two union members quietly leafleted the majority of customers within the store until management finally ejected us.

Third street promenade on a sultry Sunday afternoon in hipster beach town Santa Monica is packed. We passed out over a thousand flyers. Many people asked us where another bookstore was and then went and shopped elsewhere. Many passers by were union members walking the promenade, excited to see more evidence of action heat-

Miriam: One Year Later

Sixteen months ago, my fellow workers and I were gearing up for victory in one of the most important struggles of our lives. We were in the thick of an IWW organizing drive at Borders Books that gave us our hope back just when we thought there was no way our jobs could ever improve. Instead of listing one more time all the problems we had with Borders, I want to remember for a moment how the union made us feel. It felt like a miracle.

Before the union, we felt depressed and powerless. With the union, we felt like we could determine our own fate. What a joy it was to work together with trust and loyalty, planning the future of our jobs, our bookstore, and our union. We could even enjoy our jobs again, feeling like we were doing our best for each other, not for the sake of some rich corporate boss who just wanted the profits we could make for him. At that point we had more excitement for the future than anger at the company. I could see it in the faces of my fellow workers: we were going to create something beautiful and glorious. It was the power of solidarity.

The rest of the story is well known. The company's lies, false promises, and deep purse divided our shared sense of purpose, and led to a narrow defeat. Because I had been a union activist and continued to organize, I was fired on a ridiculous pretext. "It's true," I thought at the time. "They have the power and can do whatever they want."

Because of the IWW, I now know that's not true. Across the country, Wobblies threw up picket lines. Before I knew it, there was a national boycott. The tremendous outpouring of support, caring and righteous indignation taught me that the disappoint-

ing results of an NLRB election didn't mean that I was powerless and solidarity was dead. I still had a union, a fighting union, a union with the power to defend its organizers with every ounce of commitment it possessed. The Borders story spread, and thousands joined the boycott. The union spirit caught fire at Borders stores across the country. Once again it felt like a miracle.

IWW direct action exposed Borders' notorious union-busting throughout the country last year. There's an ugly scar on Borders' "liberal" public image, and the company has lost millions in sales and legal fees for all those fancy lawyers. Three Borders stores have gone union and more are on the way. Borders workers have learned that they have the power to organize and that they can fight back when management retaliates. The fact that the NLRB wouldn't pursue my charges only shows how urgently necessary direct action will always be.

It's now been a year since I was fired. Our flyers used to say "Reinstate Miriam Fried!" Now I have a new job, a job where I get respect and a living wage, and so I no longer want to be reinstated. I don't ask my fellow workers to picket outside of Borders anymore, and my GMB has other campaigns to think about.

But as Wobs say, "We never forget." And I will never forget either the injustice Borders showed myself and my fellow workers, or the Wobblies' stupendous commitment to righting these wrongs. Thank you for your unwavering support, your hard work, and your courage. Thank you for being a union a worker can depend on.

— Miriam Fried, June 15, 1997

125 on the line in Boston

The sidewalk plaza in front of the Boston Borders was packed with protesters June 15th. Starting with a half-dozen pickets at 1 p.m., our ranks quickly swelled to about 125. Boston Wobblies were joined by members of SEIU 925 (currently battling Rounder Records for a living wage), Food Not Bombs, Homes Not Jails, the Brudderhoff, and Wobblies from Western Massachusetts and Philadelphia. We distributed 1,500 leaflets to potential customers and passersby, and could have distributed many more (we ran out after a couple of hours).

Traffic in and out of the store was light (a good thing, too, as it was a constant effort to keep a path clear for the handful of scissorbills who wanted to scurry in) and many customers turned away. Business was so light that the assistant manager on duty and several Borders workers spent most of the day outside observing our picket line and talking with protesters.

Management was particularly vigorous in enforcing the No Free Speech zone surrounding the store, brusquely ordering one Brudderhoffer whose heel protruded perhaps a half-inch over the line in the concrete that marks the Borders property line to move. We were observed throughout the action by Borders security and a plainclothes cop, and briefly by a couple of uniformed cops who chatted with the assistant manager and then left. (A Borders worker quickly approached us to explain that Borders had not called the police, and did not know who had.)

After a couple of hours of picketing, dozens of protesters entered the store, beating drums and blowing whistles and carrying signs demanding that Borders stop intimidating union supporters and negotiate in good faith in Chicago. They went up the escalator to the main floor, where they were met by three obviously supportive workers and ordered by management to leave immediately. We're told it was extremely noisy inside for several minutes, and that it was impossible to carry on business.

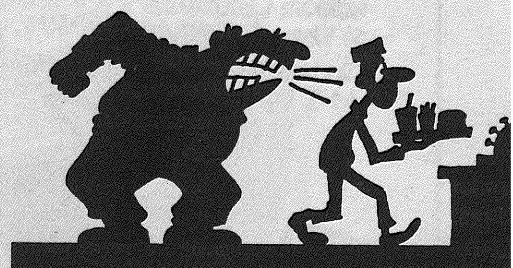


ing up in the labor movement. We chatted with curious or interested employees from the store (and one from another bookstore who wanted to know happenings in his industry) and explained to them that since the picket began Borders management has not fired any other workers even though there has been lots of union activity. The picket has acted as an umbrella of protection under which workers can choose to organize. We finished the picket celebrating the one year anniversary of the book industry being pried open by the IWW so that its own workers can organize and join the labor movement.

Borders was having a sale, but they didn't sell many books, and the store looked mighty empty despite it being a busy shopping day on the Promenade. One year later, other side of the continent, a million dollars of economic damage. We never forget.

— Michael Reinsborough

SOME FOLKS ARE FORCED TO WORK FOR LOW WAGES.



SOME FOLKS ARE FORCED TO DO NON-UNION WORK.



THE W

Immediately after ushering people out of the store, Borders security locked the doors, closing a steel shutter around the front revolving door which is the main entrance to the store. They then ushered customers through a single door flanked by two security guards for the remainder of the action.

The proceedings were enlivened by several drummers, as well as by speeches by Fellow Workers Jon Bekken and Alexis Buss, who also read a moving statement by FW Miriam Fried thanking the crowd for their solidarity. Several Borders workers listened to the speeches and spoke with members of the crowd.

The Wichita, Kansas, IWW made its first public appearance, and other actions happened at Borders outlets across the country. All in all, Borders has had better days. Union-busting is not only disgusting—it can also hit the bosses in their pocketbooks.

Sierra Leone coup endangers Wobs

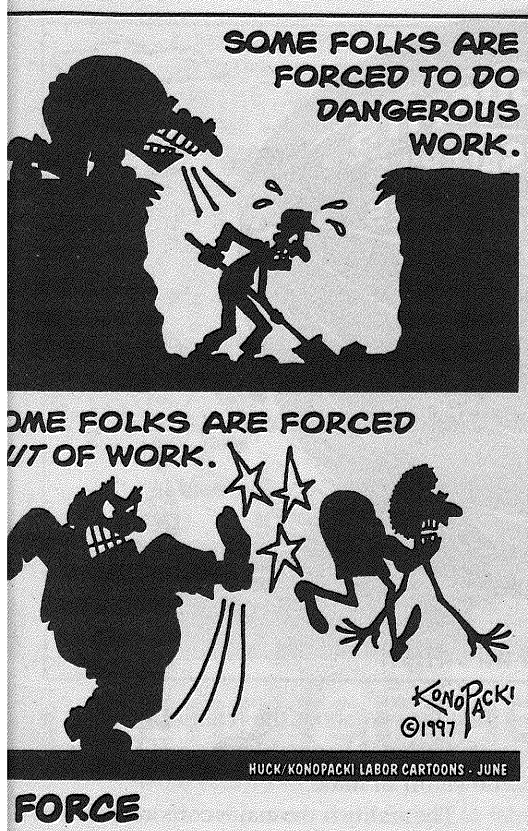
Government workers have been on general strike since the army ousted the elected government in Sierra Leone, and the entire labor movement is united in opposition to the military regime. IWW organizer Bright Chikeize reports that looters destroyed his office, stealing practically everything. He and some other Wobs were evacuated to Guinea by U.S. marines, and are meeting with workers there while awaiting the collapse of the military regime.

Some 3,200 Sierra Leonean gold and diamond miners have requested IWW representation, and are struggling against gyppo contractors who hire at piece rates and then shortchange workers in the weighing process. Organizing is necessarily on hold so long as military thugs are roaming the streets harassing everyone they see. But efforts are underway to send a delegation to Sierra Leone once the present crisis has passed.

HMO murder for profit

A physician recently confessed to causing a California man's death by denying him a heart transplant in order to save her HMO insurance company half a million dollars. Dr. Linda Peeno says her decision still haunts her. It was a certain death sentence, she said, but the pressure to deny the claim was overwhelming.

Instead of being prosecuted for murder, Humana rewarded her with advancement in her job as a medical coverage reviewer. "Everyone was thrilled when I denied that coverage," she said. "If I had approved it, I would have been gone the next day."



Direct Action is the way...

continued from page 1

believe that the government would do even that much.

The unions bureaucrats were harassed enough to throw the rank and file a bone even as it sold them down the river. As a result of much agitation on the part of locked-out workers, there will be a national march on Detroit this June. Tactically, little has changed. The only recourse that locked-out workers have is to find a way to make it more inconvenient to crush these unions than not to.

Since the company has already spent over a quarter of a billion dollars busting these unions, it's clear that applying pressure directly to the source is ineffectual. Gannet-Knight Ridder have shown that they are willing to do whatever it takes to end organized labor in this country. No price is too high to ensure that they will never again have to pay a living wage to any worker.

There are other ways that the company could be forced to the bargaining table. The

city could stop spending money on cops to defend the company; it could tell them that until this is settled that the paper won't be sold anywhere on city property; it can make it clear that Detroit is a union town and it will not continue business as usual with a union busting company.

But why would the city want to do all that? They would want to if we made it impossible for them to ignore this struggle. The powers that be are going to do whatever is in their best interest – it's up to us to make a fair settlement of this strike their priority. We can only do this if we take direct action.

We have to make this a front burner issue again, something that cannot be ignored. We have an obligation to do whatever we can to make this strike a visible embarrassment to the city of Detroit.

That means all of us showing up on the picket lines and in front of government offices and anywhere and everywhere we can to bring visibility to this struggle. We have to stand up for what we believe in, in

places where people will see us, in ways they cannot ignore.

These ideas are nothing new. Our most successful moments in this strike have been when we have done exactly that. People notice you when you shut down a freeway or when the paper has to be delivered by helicopter. People want to know what the hell's going on in Detroit that unionists are so desperate they shut down an international border. These are the things that make the city take notice. This strike has derailed the lives of hundreds of workers – it's time it derailed business as usual.

This strike is going to end soon and it's going to end as either a victory for the workers or the bosses, and that has nothing to do with newspapers.

Which side wins is up to us. We can step up this campaign – or we can walk around and then walk away. After all, chants are nice – but actions speak louder than words.

— Carol Igoe, Detroit IWW

Longshoremen to quit Labor Party?

Delegates to the International Longshore and Warehouse Union's April convention rejected a proposal to pay the \$10,000 fee required to become an official member of the new Labor Party. The move followed heated debate over whether it was possible to work with the Democratic Party, whether affiliation would endanger the ILWU's political independence, and whether the funds could not be better spent on bona fide union business.

A proposal to cut spending on the ILWU paper, *The Dispatcher*, was also rejected. In addition to raising per capita payments to fund increased organizing, delegates also heard from Mersey dockers (contributing \$3,500 to their cause), and Japanese, Canadian and Russian dockworkers. A Filipino union leader, KMU chair Crispin Beltran, was refused a visa by the U.S. State Department, as was an officer of the National Union of Sugar Workers of Cuba.

Lessons of the Detroit Strike

In the May *Industrial Worker*, Eric Chester proves that the systematically corrupt AFL-CIO "reform" leadership in the Detroit newspaper strike played a key role in the collapse of the 19-month strike. I think this is true. I simply hope to add a few details of other reasons the strike was lost – and what to do about it.

1. Racism. The newspaper workers and their unions had done virtually nothing about the racism in the make-up of their own ranks, and little about the racist, anti-worker postures of the two newspapers before the strike. Indeed many of the reporters and staff workers were complicit with this racism. When they walked out, declaring that their strike could not lose in a "Detroit – Union Town," they took little notice of the fact that this is a predominantly black city and many of its residents had plenty of unanswered problems with the unions.

2. The strikers never made their issues or demands clear to the community, perhaps because the community might have rejected some demands that failed to incorporate technological gains into work life. Rather than demand a shorter work week with no pay cut, for example, in some instances the strikers demanded retaining archaic work rules to protect jobs. In any case, few people in Detroit understood what the strike was about, other than to protect union jobs, many of which were color-coded.

3. Beyond the question of ideas and mass support, the AFL-CIO had no plan to organize against owners who openly declared they wanted to smash the unions. The strikers did little to prepare the community for the battle. They simply walked out the door and expected the community to pour onto the picket lines. The who, what, when, where, why simplicities of any strike were not planned – and the rank and file walked without asking for strategies. Either inside the unions or in the community, there was no organizational base for a serious strike.

4. Individual strikers ceded their analytical abilities to leaders they should have known are corrupt. Before the strike, at the strike votes, there was no real planning or discussion about the next step, what Eric Chester makes clear is the necessary stoppage of production. Instead, at mass meetings that I attended, the strikers cheered and applauded the "new" leaders of the AFL-CIO (they were still running for election then) and believed it when the hacks said "No matter what it costs, the AFL-CIO will never let this become another PATCO." So after a twenty year period in which the AFL-CIO beat up nobody but their own members

the newspaper strikers actually believed they would be saved by the AFL.

5. It isn't possible to overestimate the treachery of the AFL and especially the UAW leadership. They systematically disorganized, coerced, inveigled and wrecked every effort to build community support and militancy – to the point of breaking up picket lines and identifying militants to the police. As Eric Chester says, they (the Carey-Trumka-Sweeney reformers and some local hacks) finally rammed through the unconditional surrender (now posed as a new method of striking), a scheme they had in the works for months as honest and persevering members pounded the pavement. In some locals no real vote was ever taken.

6. At some point even decent people who become instruments of their own oppression also become responsible for their fate. Many former newspaper strikers are now organizing a demonstration in Detroit on June 20th. They continue to refuse to openly criticize the AFL bosses, and they fail to criticize their own errors. If the demonstration comes off as planned, it will simply build the AFL and the Democratic Party, leaving the working class in worse shape still. These failed strikers cannot let go of the kind of thinking, the fear of freedom and responsibility, that clings to the authoritarian idea that someone other than the rank and file is going to win strikes, and the wish that some magic other than halting production can bring victory. Even their own harsh experience hasn't taught them they are wrong – though a few probably like the little limelight that comes with going around the country claiming you were victimized by a nasty corporation.

Built into any analysis of the past is a suggestion for the future. Here are two:

The June 20 demonstration must have an anti-racist presence that attacks the treason of the AFL-CIO. This summer is the 30th anniversary of the Detroit rebellion, an uprising that caused the creation of thousands of industrial jobs for black workers and the expansion of programs for poor mothers and kids. A rank-and-file commemoration of that rebellion would make the point.

There may be a teachers' strike in Detroit in the fall. If it is to win, the teachers and other school workers need to learn the lessons of the bogus newspaper strike. The conscious, organized rank and file will need to build deep ties to the community – beyond anything the leadership promises. That also means educators must put money demands on the back burden (teachers are the

most organized workers in the U.S., and have some of the last jobs with security and health benefits).

Wage demands will not build alliances that will give school workers power. Instead class size, academic freedom, and a shift in the tax structure back onto unproductive wealth (profits, inheritance, capital gains, etc.) should be the demands of the strike, and everyone should know what they are, and why.

AFL-CIO leaders are likely to look to politicians and the business community as a source of strength. In a job action, rank-and-file educators need to look to their own, the people who have most to gain from school: poor and working-class parents and kids. They're the next lever for social change: democracy and equality.

— Rich Gibson

Does the AFL really want to win?

Tens of thousands of militant activists are descending on Detroit the weekend of June 19 and 20. We will be demanding that the News and the Free Press rehire the hundreds of workers left in the lurch when union leaders declared an unconditional halt to their strike. Our brothers and sisters need our help. We can make a difference.

Nevertheless, we need to be clear that this national day of action is much too late. During the first weeks of the strike, thousands of militants besieged the suburban printing plant, and blocked the distribution of scab newspapers. The corporations quickly convinced a judge to issue an order prohibiting mass picketing, and the local leadership acquiesced. After that, union tactics never transcended the symbolic. Consumer boycotts, corporate campaigns, civil disobedience, all were aimed at undermining the public image of the newspaper conglomerates. These were tactics that were bound to fail, and, indeed, have consistently failed to win a series of crucial confrontations from Austin P-9 to Deatur. It was a situation that demanded mass mobilizations.

Detroit is a union town. The United Auto Workers could have initiated a rolling series of one-day strikes, closing auto plants and coordinating demonstrations designed to prevent the distribution of the scab papers. The Teamsters, representing the largest single segment of strikers, could have urged truck drivers to come to Detroit, converging on the printing plant, bringing traffic to a standstill. The AFL-CIO could have organized a national day of action when the strike could have still been won, not now when it has already been lost. Nothing beyond the symbolic was done. Instead, the Detroit newspaper workers were left hanging, as the union bureaucrats went on collecting dues, and helping Clinton and the Democrats to another turn at the trough.

In February of this year, nineteen months into the strike, Ron Carey, Teamster president and alleged union reformer, joined with other union presidents in an act of total capitulation. The unions agreed that the strikers would return to work without conditions, that is without a union contract. Since then, only a trickle of striking workers have been tendered job offers. Finally, the AFL-CIO has been embarrassed into calling a national day of action.

The IWW is in Detroit to show our solidarity with the newspaper workers. We are in Detroit because of our commitment to rebuild and revive a democratic, militant trade union movement. We are in Detroit to forge ties with the many rank and file activists who share our commitment, and who are prepared to move forward, despite the ruthless greed of the corporate magnates, and the inertia and timidity of the union bureaucrats.

Shut Down Motown!

— Eric Chester

Global Competition?

Corporations, like Caterpillar, throw this catch phrase around every day as the explain-all answer for the evil that they do to their employees and customers.

At any hint of disagreement from anyone they lay on the disdain – “Global competition is a reality of today’s market place and anyone who doubts it is a fool!” – or some other equally snide and aloof remark. As if multi-national corporations had suddenly sprung wholly formed from the dust just a minute or two ago.

But they are rather shy about any discussion about just who it is that is doing the competing. Let’s take a look at how this appears to be working. Major Corporation A (MCA) is competing with Major Corporation B (MCB). Let’s not dirty our discussion with their pedigrees ... suffice to say they both have facilities all around our global rock. So MCA and MCB each take turns cutting and gutting the ranks of employees or making the product ever cheaper and flimsy. Now for the multi-billion dollar question: “Where does all this ‘cost saving’ go?” Why, [heavy disdain again] our customers

enjoy those cost-savings! Right ... and who would like to buy a public bridge? Ask them why their executive officers and shareholders seem to be running off with all the cash and they suddenly can’t find the chart or graph with the answer.

The simple fact is the workers and their communities are doing the competing and this basement sale fever can only eventually end up with all of us working for peanuts ... or less.

Caterpillar recently “OutSourced” [another one of those catchy phrases, eh?] a number of trades jobs in the Peoria area. Since they couldn’t get the UAW workers to swallow their extortion, they took their jobs away with the GC catch-phrase and OSed them to local contractors. Now comes the rub, the local contractors are also hiring union labor who don’t work Saturday, Sunday and holidays for straight time ... at least they didn’t use to. One of the trade unions actually voted to agree to give up the eight-hour day and weekend overtime to keep the jobs they were getting from us. What do you suppose will happen next? Can you imagine



there might be some other group of workers who might work for less pay or benefit? Do you suppose this downward spiral has a pretty end? [For anybody but Caterpillar, that is?]

So about now you may be tempted to climb up on your high horse and tell me a

thing or two about the realities of today’s job market. I know, I know, and I’ll climb down off of mine.

The reality is the major corporations are running the show and we aren’t. Why is that?

I think maybe that is the multi-billion dollar question right there: “Why are the corporations running our country?” Or is the question “Who elected the government who is running the country for the corporations?” Or some variation of the same end result.

Our local union president Jerry Brown has often made this statement: “When a worker beats up a worker ... a worker loses.” And I agree completely with that, so please don’t get the idea I am beating up on those workers who agreed to do our work for less. I know they need jobs too.

But ... in the same breath I have to ask myself when is this all going to stop? When do we dare to stop competing with one another and turn our sights on the major corporations who are gobbling up our heritage, resources, and communities?

When are we going to lay down our tools and take a stand against the deadly acronyms that are ruining our standards of living? NAFTA, GATT, RTW, etc?

If we are waiting for our government to give us permission ... well, I got a bridge to sell you.

So what are our choices then? I should say we don’t have very many at present, but the reality is those choices are getting fewer while we wait.

The first obvious choice is to get your name on the scorecard. If you aren’t registered to vote, then get registered and vote for your kind of people. Don’t spend your hard earned wages to support outfits like Pabst, Staley, Nike, [the list is long!]. Get active with your union or your community. Stop letting others make these important decisions without you.

And never, I mean *never* cross a picket line to work or buy a product. Don’t let these outfits hoodwink you into believing their sorry catch-phrases. If you agree that you are worth less than the person doing the job now, you will be worth less ... and less ...

— Michael Legel, UAW Local 974.
Reprinted from *The Unionite* May 28

Unemployment Time Bomb

The suicide of a jobless migrant May 13 underscores the brewing tensions simmering in China, as state enterprises continue to lay off hundreds of thousands of workers. An unemployed worker set off the blast that killed him in Beijing’s central Zhongshan Park amid shocking forecasts, made by China’s own planners, that 20 million people from the state sector will be left unemployed by the turn of the century.

Although China claims an urban jobless rate of 3 percent, World Bank calculations put unemployment at 11 to 20 percent.

NPR spikes poem on Abu-Jamal case

National Public Radio’s “All Things Considered” commissioned award-winning poet Martin Espada to compose a poem as part of NPR’s April observance of National Poetry Month. NPR suggested a poem focusing on a news story in one of the cities Espada was visiting during a reading tour.

Espada chose Philadelphia, and submitted an offering entitled “Another Nameless Prostitute Says the Man Is Innocent.” The man referred to is Mumia Abu-Jamal, on death row in Pennsylvania. Abu-Jamal was sentenced to death on a charge of killing a policeman he encountered beating his brother, after a trial in which police intimidated and threatened witnesses whose testimony would have exonerated him. Abu-Jamal had long been active in civil rights and other struggles in Philadelphia. The judge would not allow him to represent himself, and refused his attorney adequate funds to prepare a defense.

When NPR saw what Espada’s poem was about, it balked.

“Everyone around me in Philadelphia was talking about Mumia’s case,” Espada says. He read an article in the *Philadelphia Weekly* of April 16 reporting that those who have come forward with testimony that might clear Abu-Jamal seemed to vanish.

Espada faxed his poem to NPR April 21. Four days later, NPR informed him that it would not broadcast the poem because of its subject matter and political content.

PBS censors labor program

The Public Broadcasting System will not air the acclaimed documentary “Out At Work” because unions are among the contributors to its production costs. However, PBS programmers have no objection to airing hours of corporate-sponsored propaganda every week. “Out at Work” was scheduled to air on the “Point of View” series, but was dropped after PBS refused to air it.

The film follows the stories of three gay and lesbian workers over the course of five years. Cheryl Summerville, a cook in a suburban Atlanta Cracker Barrel restaurant, was fired in 1991 for “failing to comply with normal heterosexual values.” Ron Woods, a Chrysler Corp. auto plant electrician, underwent months of physical and verbal harassment after his co-workers found out he was gay. Bronx library clerk Nat Keitt found himself deeply in debt when his partner of 11 years became ill and lost his health benefits.

“We found Out At Work to be compelling television responsibly done on a significant issue,” PBS’s Sandra Heberer said, while objecting to the fact that about one-fifth of the program’s funding came from labor organizations.

The Bad News

Some jobs are to die for. Citing the strongest evidence yet, researchers find that people who have little control over their work life (such as, say, a secretary or an assembly-line worker) have a whopping 70% higher risk of dying from heart disease than those who can decide what they will do and when.

The Good News

If you’re not an employer, you’re probably an employee and therefore eligible to become a Wobbly.

Abolish wage-slavery; organize One Big Democratic Classwide Union.

For Mumia Abu-Jamal

The board-blinded windows knew what happened;
the pavement sleepers of Philadelphia, groaning
in their ghost-infested sleep, knew what happened;
every black man blessed
with the gashed eyebrow of nightsticks
knew what happened;
even Walt Whitman knew what happened,
poet a century dead, keeping vigil
from the tomb on the other side of the bridge.

Fifteen years ago, the cataract stare
of the cruiser’s headlights
the impossible angle of the bullet,
the tributaries and lakes of blood,
Officer Faulkner dead, suspect Mumia shot in the chest,
the nameless witnesses who saw a gunman
running away, his heart and feet thudding.

The nameless prostitutes know,
hunched at the curb, their bare legs chilled.
Their faces squinted to see that night,
rouged with fading bruises.
Now another nameless prostitute has disappeared,
says the newspaper. Her nameless name
was Cynthia White, witness for the defense.
Perhaps she stiffens eyes open in a fresh bed of soil,
or floats in the warm gulf stream of her addiction,
or hides from the fanged whispers of the police
in the tomb of Walt Whitman,
where the granite door is open
and fugitive slaves may rest.

Mumia: the Panther beret, the thinking dreadlocks,
sharing meals with people named Africa,
singing out their names even after the police bombardment
that charred their black bodies.
So the governor has signed the death warrant.
The executioner’s needle would flush the poison
down into Mumia’s writing hand
so the fingers curl like a burned spider;
his calm questioning mouth would grow numb,
and everywhere radios sputter to silence, in his memory.

Cynthia White is gone, gone to the segregated balcony of whores.
But the newspaper reports that another nameless prostitute
says the man is innocent, that she will testify at the next hearing.
Beyond the courthouse, a multitude of witnesses chants, prays,
shouts for his prison to collapse, a shack in a hurricane.

Mumia, if the last nameless prostitute
becomes an unraveling turban of steam,
if the judges’ robes become clouds of ink
swirling like octopus deception,
if the shroud becomes your Amish quilt,
if your dreadlocks are snipped during autopsy,
then drift above the ruined RCA factory
that once birthed radios
to the tomb of Walt Whitman,
where the granite door is open
and fugitive slaves may rest.

— Martin Espada
Philadelphia, PA/Camden, NJ

Argentine workers fight austerity

Police attacked 500 workers demonstrating against government austerity plans May 22nd, injuring 80 workers in a barrage of tear gas rubber bullets. Argentina's soaring unemployment has hit towns in outlying provinces particularly hard, and protests racking the country have increasingly incorporated roadblocks to draw attention to their plight.

Roadblocks and 24-hour general strikes have protested 16- to 18-hour workdays, demanding reduced hours without pay cuts to address unemployment rates that run as high as 40 percent in some industrial cities.

Although the government says it will not negotiate with protestors, it did promise some 4,000 temporary jobs to end a roadblock by unemployed workers in Tartagal. The jobs will last up to one year, and pay less than half the legal minimum wage.

Edgardo Quiroga, head of the San Lorenzo General Confederation of Labour, said the strategy of the roadblocks, "emerged from the people ... to call for an end to exploitation and the creation of new jobs."

"The two faces of Argentina's economic model can be seen" in San Lorenzo, said Quiroga: "There is a shrinking sector that will export six billion dollars worth of goods this year, while nearly half of the workers are out of work."

Quiroga said local authorities in the province of Santa Fe have promised to create new jobs, but in community gardens for \$200 a month—less than appealing to 'workers in the chemical, petrochemical, plastic, cooking oil and ceramic industries.'

Trelleborg: Take the money and run

Swedish-based multinational Trelleborg has decided to pull out of a US subsidiary rather than face international odium over its exploitation of anti-labour laws in America.

Trelleborg, which has wide-ranging mining, chemical and rubber interests, will sell its US subsidiary Boliden Intertrade Inc to a group of American investors, including the American managers who provoked a bitter dispute at the firm's Copperhill sulphuric acid plant in Tennessee. Workers have been on strike at Copperhill since April 30, 1996, over a unilateral management attempt to impose sweeping changes in work rules. Copperhill responded to the strike by "permanently replacing" the strikers and refusing to recognize the striking unions.

Mersey dockers...

continued from page 1

The Central Organisation of Sweden's Workers, SAC, has decided to send 250,000 crowns to the fighting dockers in Liverpool, several of whom are facing eviction from their homes.

SAC is initiating a campaign called "One hour for Liverpool," through which members are being asked to donate an hour's pay to the dockers. They hope to broaden the appeal to encompass all trade unions and political organisations in Sweden.

Scabs suffering injuries

Workers hired by employment agencies to scab on the Mersey dockers are suffering alarmingly high injury rates. One worker reports he was hired for one day's work (12 hours), and told it was a packing job. He was required to heave 60 kg bags of cocoa beans onto pallets in the hold of a ship in the Liverpool port. As he dragged and lifted sacks, a crane lowered a steel plate into the hold and lifted out the pallets—with bags falling off and raining down on the

SUPPORT THE WORKERS' PRESS

Bengali garment workers win day off

The Bengali National Garment Workers Union (NGWF) cancelled their planned strike after the employers have accepted their main demands. All workers will get Friday off. Emergency shipments can not be given out on Fridays. Child care will be provided in all factories. The May Day national paid holiday will be strictly implemented. And the minimum wage of \$23 a month will be paid.

Until now garment workers usually had to work 7 days a week, sometimes for as little as \$10 a month. Out of the 1.5 million workers in the garment industry, only about 60,000 are organized; one third of them in the NGWF.

Disney contractor fires 4 unionists

The L.V. Myles Company, one of Disney's main sourcing agents in Haiti, fired four workers in May at one of its factories as part of an intimidation campaign against workers who were circulating a flier in the factory. The flier protested wages and conditions at the factory and called on workers to organize to obtain their rights.

The Myles factory, like the 13 other factories in Haiti producing garments under various Disney labels, pays its workers about half the minimum living wage in Haiti, a range of from 28 cents to 39 cents per hour or \$11.20 to \$15.60 per week. Workers are forced to produce at an inhuman rate, under constant verbal abuse and threats of being laid off or fired.

On May 12, a flier protesting these abusive conditions and calling for workers to organize to defend their rights was circulated anonymously inside the L.V. Miles factory. Management singled out a worker it suspected and fired her, even though this particular worker was not even involved in distributing the fliers. That same week three additional workers were fired arbitrarily and a systematic campaign of intimidation was started by management, with threats of an impending 40 additional firings.

Please call Paul Miller at L.V. Myles in New York at 212/735-0900 and demand the immediate suspension of all acts of intimidation, lay-offs, firings and reprisals against workers trying to organize; payment of a living wage to all workers, which in Haiti should be at least US\$5 per day, and the lowering of production quotas; rehiring the workers fired in May.

workers below. Workers received no training or safety equipment.

Meanwhile, Customs men scoured the ship, looking for drugs. Shocked by the behaviour of the dock workers and in particular their lack of attention to health and safety issues, they complained to their own management.

The employment agency supplying the scabs says they were tricked into doing so, with the work order coming through a subcontractor. But another agency has opened a Liverpool office to supply scabs 24 hours a day.

One temporary worker's leg was broken loading copper cathode cargo; another worker on a similar job was run over by a stacker truck.

Eddie Gray quit the job on the second day. "I was going past in a taxi and they were saying 'scabs, scabs.' I just went 'fuckin hell', I just got out of the cab and walked up and said 'Is this your jobs that I'm taking here?' ... They told me it's better to keep your pride than to cross a picket line and take a man's job. If I knew what the job was before, I wouldn't have went. I wouldn't have went."

Hard Fight in Nigeria

Nigeria is increasingly a pariah in the international community. The mere mention of the country's name evokes corruption, military dictatorship, debt, disease and disaster. Nigeria is living dangerously and this, even by Africa's long suffering standards, speaks volumes for a country blessed with abundant oil and gas reserves, several solid minerals, agricultural potential and overflowing human capital. Three decades of military rule have spawned the monstrous specter of unfreedom, denial of fundamental human rights, violent subjugation and brutalisation. The tragedy of Nigeria is underlined by the facts that the country continues to live well below her potentials; the economy is in ruins. The population is held prisoner by the barrel of military armour that has brought the country to its knees.

1996 was both a trying and rewarding year for Nigeria's Awareness League and its members. As usual AL had several brushes with security operatives and the military. Two League workshops were disrupted by police and the security service, who claimed they were acting on "orders from above." They said both meetings were illegal and were designed to sabotage the transition to civil rule program of the junta.

In response to a strike by lecturers in all of Nigeria's universities, the authorities initiated a massive clampdown on the teachers and other activists. Hundreds were arrested and detained, while the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) was proscribed by military decree. Two AL members were detained for three months in the course of the general clampdown. They are: Comrade Ahmed Ojefia of the University of Uyo and Comrade Rex Denedo of the University of Jos. Their incarceration did little to dampen their faith and commitment to the struggle for a just and better society.

On July 26, 1996, AL in conjunction with three other groups organised a peaceful protest to press the junta to release all activists and journalists incarcerated since Abacha seized power in November 1993. A follow-up workshop was called off as a result of a massive clampdown that followed a planned nationwide strike by oil workers unions. The League held its annual conference on October 29, 1996. The congress was attended by about 65 delegates.

The intensified repression has dictated a reassessment of tactics, in particular a new initiative to establish industrial networks. AL's activities had been concentrated in the universities, media houses and the civil services. Now AL's presence will be felt in other key sectors of the economy. Medium-size networks have been established within the ranks of junior bank workers in several cities as well as among oil workers in Warri, Calabar and Port-Harcourt in the oil-devastated Niger Delta Region.

The implication of this development are immediately obvious: AL can directly participate in major oil and bank workers strike actions henceforth, in addition to the opportunity to enlarge its membership and bolster awareness about anarcho-syndicalism within the ranks of Nigerian workers.

The XXth Congress of the IWA-AIT admitted AL as the AIT's Nigerian section.

Carey win bought with stolen funds?

Washington consultant Martin Davis has been arrested on a mail fraud charge stemming from a plot to loot Teamster union funds to finance Teamster President Ron Carey's re-election campaign. Michael Ansara, chief executive officer of telemarketer Share Group, Inc., has already pled guilty to conspiracy charges and is cooperating in a federal grand jury probe. It appears increasingly likely that the election will be overturned, in which case a disgraced rank-and-file would most likely vote Carey out of office and turn the union over to mob-linked Jimmy Hoffa Jr.

Davis, who worked for Carey's re-election effort, reportedly arranged for the Teamsters union and the Citizen Action organization to pay \$95,000 to Ansara's Share Group for work it did not do—much of it on the 1996 congressional campaign. The money was transferred to Ansara's wife, who in turn forwarded the funds to "Teamsters for a Corruption Free Union," a group of wealthy liberals (none believed to be Teamsters) who used the funds to pay for last-minute direct mail campaign expenses.

Carey claims to have not been informed of the scheme. His administration has relied heavily on several Teamsters officials who gained office while the union was a Mafia fiefdom, and who continue to run "their" locals without regards for the rights of Teamster members (for all that they are now endorsed by "Teamsters for a Democratic Union," which increasingly operates as a political machine for the Carey regime). Long accustomed to treating union funds as their own personal piggy bank, some of these functionaries may well have seen the looting of union funds for Carey's re-election simply as business as usual.

Complaints of financial irregularities have also been levelled against the Hoffa campaign, and no advocate of democratic unionism would welcome a Hoffa administration.. But for many rank-and-file Teamsters, it is increasingly difficult to reconcile the Carey regime's trampling on union democracy with the ongoing need to transform the Teamsters into something more closely resembling a labor union.

Sweeney local uses non-union janitors

The 70 workers who polish floors, clean bathrooms and collect garbage in SEIU local 32B-32J's Manhattan headquarters are forced to sign a yellow-dog contract surrendering all union rights. While SEIU 32 pays the workers the same wages and benefits it negotiates for its members, it reserves the right to fire workers, slash pay and change work rules without consultation.

The local is headed by "Greedy Gus" Bevana, who is paid \$412,000 a year by union members few of whom make as much as \$30,000 a year. It is John Sweeney's home local, and after leaving to take his prior position heading the Service Employees International, Sweeney continued drawing a healthy paycheck from the local as a consultant.

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"We want to help American business compete in the world... It is time for business and labor to see each other as natural allies, not natural enemies."

— AFL-CIO President John Sweeney

SEIU, Bosses in Love Fest

The new president of the Service Employees International Union has declared an end to strikes and demonstrations in the union's 10-year Justice for Janitors organizing campaign and called for cooperation rather than confrontation.

SEIU President Andrew Stern told landlords that the janitor's campaign militancy has "produced a degree of polarization that serves none of our interests." Stern said the union would immediately cease strikes, picketing and demonstrations in Washington, D.C., and would work with the real estate industry in an effort to cut taxes.

Borders meeting...

continued from page 3

the company's stylish past, Tom Borders was there.

A few of us began to pass out leaflets which stated the IWW's position, only to be told that like photographs, leaflets weren't allowed. Fellow Workers Buss and Hidano continued to leaflet the room regardless, as I confronted the woman about the inappropriateness of her statement. As rightful shareholders in the company, I couldn't believe that we couldn't hand out our opinion of the company's actions, and upon checking with Borders Group Chief Legal Counsel Thomas Carney, she withdrew her statement.

The meeting began with boring resolutions which had to be voted on, then moved to a slide show highlighting the future of Borders, and finally the floor was opened to general questions. FW Buss inquired as to why the corporate chiefs were raking in millions while the booksellers were making less than a living wage. Borders management countered this with the stock options available to employees after six months of full-time employment. What they conveniently did not mention at this point was the discrepancy in the amount of money that corporate honchos accrue in salary alone in comparison to the amount of money that employees make in stock options collectively each year. The amount of money that the employees collectively make each year in stock options pales in light of the gargantuan salaries the corporate honchos make. We mentioned reports of people being put on part-time hours after five and a half months, prohibiting employees from taking advantage of the stock options. DiRomulado indignantly refused to believe it.

Fellow Workers Buss and Helms questioned the cost effectiveness of union-busting. The scope of the anti-union efforts had reached enormous proportions, with Mark Schiffman being brought in to fight Miriam Fried's \$399 unemployment claim and Ann Kubek's anti-union training manual. A young man seated in the same section as union delegation spoke up. Although making clear that he was not associated with us, he was not happy to see Borders called 'Union-buster of the year' in a midwest newspaper.

Although the Border's executives did not openly succumb to our stance on their union-busting tactics, we made it clear that the inappropriateness of their unjustifiable actions will not be dealt with in silence. It was unfortunate that employees from local Borders bookstores were not present, but with the threat of being fired or reprimanded hanging over their heads, their absence was not so surprising.

— Bob Helms/Lori Hidano

John Sweeney, Middle Class Hero

America Needs A Raise, by John J. Sweeney, president of the AFL-CIO. Houghton-Mifflin Company, Boston, 1996.

John Sweeney represents a first for the AFL-CIO. His election to president is the first time that anyone mounted a successful challenge to the heir designate of an outgoing AFL-CIO president. When Lane Kirkland (himself the hand-picked heir of George Meany) decided to retire, he chose Thomas Donahue, a long-time bureaucratic yes-man to take his place. Sweeney, then president of the Service Employees International Union, saw his chance. The AFL-CIO has been in decline for several years and there is a growing dissident movement within. Sweeney, although never a dissident himself, used this discontent to snatch away Donahue's inheritance, aided by United Mine Workers president Rich Trumka and AFSCME vice-president Linda Chavez-Thompson, as well as other top officials of the liberal wing of the AFL-CIO. Sweeney campaigned for AFL-CIO president based upon a platform referred to as the "New Voice." This book is a restatement of Sweeney's campaign platform.

The first thing that strikes the reader of the book is that there is not much innovative within it. There are some useful statistics showing how American corporations have conducted a one-sided class war for the past twenty years, but these have all been gleaned from other more thorough and useful works. There is a call for a renewed commitment to organizing, and some evidence that, for once, the AFL-CIO is trying to live up to it. There are even some timid criticisms of the Democratic Party, and a call for efforts to get out the labor vote. Perhaps the most startling is Sweeney's suggestion that foreign workers may not be to blame for the problems of working Americans. Yet nowhere is there any indication that Sweeney intends a break from business unionism as usual.

What is Sweeney's prescription for what ails American workers? He wants to make them middle class! The goal of the AFL-CIO he says is to 'make work more attractive than welfare and lift the working poor into the middle class [and] win the middle class more security...' (p.155)

Sweeney claims that if corporations stop beating up on their workers, CEOs listen to suggestions that unions have about how to improve productivity, and the Congress passes laws against hiring permanent replacements for strikers, then workers' incomes will rise to the point that they will join the middle class. Sweeney calls this a "new social contract," and clearly sees himself as the one to negotiate it for us. He hearkens back to those golden days of the 1950s when the AFL-CIO represented one third of all American workers, and suggests that if AFL-CIO ranks can be returned to that number or better, the good old days of high wages will return.

This is all nonsense, of course. American employers are not interested in signing a new social contract as long as they're able to use direct action to get what they want. The fact remains that the AFL-CIO simply is not organized in a way to win most strikes or lock-outs. There is no need for laws against hiring permanent replacements of strikers for unions that can win strikes. The AFL-CIO allows its member unions to scab on each other during labor disputes, so unless an AFL-CIO union is made up of members so highly skilled they can't be replaced with strike-breakers, a determined employer can defeat an AFL-CIO strike. The employers know that the AFL-CIO's other unions will continue to honor contracts with the disputed employer or his business allies, instead of using organized labor's combined strength in sympathy actions. Mass

picketing or stay-ins are illegal, and the bureaucrats of the AFL-CIO may curse the bosses' laws, but they will not mobilize the members to use winning tactics. This would violate middle class respectability.

The problem is that John Sweeney just doesn't get it. Like most of the career officials who run the AFL-CIO, Sweeney is a middle class professional. He hasn't worked a real job since he worked his way through law school (neither has Trumka nor Thompson). Like other middle class professionals, the bureaucrats of the AFL-CIO function as intermediates between capitalist management and actual wage-slaves. Sweeney is neither worker nor employer, but his position depends upon the existence of both. So Sweeney seeks what other members of his class want, social peace. Class harmony is the middle class ideology. Certainly the leadership of the AFL-CIO would prefer a higher wage version of class harmony than Rush Limbaugh, but in the end, both wish to maintain a stratified society of social classes, for the privileges of the middle class depends on it.

There is an interesting passage in the book where Sweeney reveals that for him, unionism is synonymous with the middle-class professionals who run the AFL-CIO. A session of a presidential commission in 1994 asked a group of white collar workers what they thought about unions. "They said they didn't like unions - too many strikes, they thought. But as they kept talking, those employees admitted that they had problems, and they wanted their employers to pay attention to them. So they liked the idea of confronting management as a group. And they also wanted some support from outside experts - consultants as they called them. What these employees had thought up on their own sounds very much like something they said they didn't want - a union." (p.137)

Clearly, Sweeney sees himself and the rest of the AFL-CIO as consultants. The epitome of middle class professionalism. The union bureaucrats are, in turn, consultants to other middle class professionals, the workers themselves.

How can workers become middle class without ceasing to be workers? The existence of a 'middle class' presupposes an upper and lower class. If workers become middle class, then there must be another class below them. Sweeney will not admit it, but it is not and never has been the intention of the AFL-CIO to bring all workers up to the same level, since this might upset the whole system. In the 'good days' the AFL-CIO organized only a third of U.S. workers, not because as Sweeney claims the AFL-CIO became complacent, but because this was all that was necessary to achieve its goals. By representing a third of American workers, the AFL-CIO was able to become a 'player' on the national scene, and the higher wages its senior members in politically strategic union locals enjoyed insured that the union leadership stayed in power. It was the AFL-CIO officials, not the workers, who became middle class during the heyday of its 'social contract.' Many of the problems that U.S. workers now face are the result not of AFL-CIO 'complacency,' but AFL-CIO policy.

Nowhere in Sweeney's book is there mention of two-tier contracts, for example. These were the insidious contracts signed by many AFL-CIO unions during the 1970s and 1980s that allowed employers to hire new workers for below union scale in return for job security for workers already on the job. Didn't these contracts help employers lower wages for future generations? Then there were (and still are) the sweetheart contracts signed by entrenched union officials on behalf of union members with no voice in the affairs of their own union locals.

Doesn't the absence of union democracy in many AFL-CIO unions help employers keep down wages? And while it is nice that Sweeney should mention the existence of workers in other countries and the need for international solidarity, where is the admission of AFL-CIO complicity in undermining and destroying independent, democratic unions throughout the world since the 1950s? Will Sweeney withdraw the AFL-CIO from the U.S. State Department?

Book Reviews

President Sweeney's reputation as a progressive among wishful thinking rebel workers and unionists is undeserved. Sweeney may be a middle-class hero, but he is a labor opportunist. Borrowing a page from Gompers and Lewis, Sweeney has made a practice of recruiting radical workers and idealistic college students to do his organizing. For example, as president of SEIU, Sweeney recruited women's groups to help him set up District 925 for organizing clericals. He has also had some success at getting black church groups and Latin American exile unionists to bring janitors and public employees into his union. But one should make no mistake about his flattering attention, this is a business proposition. Sweeney doesn't want to dump the parasites off workers' backs or put an end to the pecking order. He just wants a bigger share of the proceeds.

— Jeff Stein

Labor & Covert Networks

Covert Network: Progressives, the International Rescue Committee and the CIA by Eric Chester, M.E. Sharp, 1995, 267 pages.

When an organization originally set up to help leftist refugees from Hitler and funnel aid to the German resistance transforms itself into an agent of United States Cold War policy and a pitchman for the Vietnam War, it is natural to ask how and why such a change took place. As Chester's awesome scholarship shows, the answer "is a story of heroism and courage, but it is also a story of closely guarded secrets, political opportunism and personal betrayal."

At the heart of the question is money. How was the committee's work to be funded, and by whom? When the IRC arose in 1942 out of the merger of International Relief Association and the Emergency Rescue Committee, its concerns were no longer those of a small welfare agency. Thousands of destitute refugees were in desperate flight from the German conquest of Europe, and the committee had no realistic hope of raising the sums needed to provide them with effective help.

Fortunately for all concerned, the committee attracted the interest and support of the newly created Office of Strategic Services, the forerunner of today's CIA, money from the War Relief Fund and, with it, the attention of the highest circles of the U.S. government. While the IRC played a critical role in rescuing left-wing dissidents who would otherwise have faced death at the hands of the Gestapo, the committee became increasingly dependent upon the government for both funds and direction.

But the leftists who had founded the IRC saw no contradiction in this development. Even former radical activists like Jay Lovestone and David Dubinsky believed that the first priority for progressives of every stripe was to win the war and end the threat of fascism. Once the Second World War was over, however, this dependence was to have serious repercussions.

When peace brought an end to overt government support, the IRC, as Chester

explains, came to rely upon an almost unique combination of prominent progressives and powerful members of the corporate and foreign policy establishment on its boards of directors, both to attract funding and to maintain its legitimacy as an independent agency aiding the victims of political misfortune throughout the world. But this legitimacy became ever more hollow as focus shifted from aiding those most in need of assistance to helping “those most valuable to our national security,” a policy which translated into generous support for refugees from “godless communism” and minuscule aid for those fleeing right-wing dictatorships. How much IRC liberals like Eleanor Roosevelt and William O. Douglas knew about this covert influence remains uncertain, but it grew steadily throughout the Cold War.

Down this slippery slope, the IRC went from interviewing Soviet defectors in Munich to raising funds to support the sabotage and terrorism of the Fighting Group Against Inhumanity inside East Germany, actions which contributed greatly to the building of the “anti-fascist protective barrier,” better known as the Berlin Wall – a propaganda defeat for the Soviet Union, but a cause of enormous suffering to the German people.

Nonetheless, right-wing extremists were not satisfied with the IRC’s work and moved to destroy it in a fascinating tale that involved reactionary Russian émigrés, gullible American capitalists, the CIA and prominent figures of the McCarthy era, made even more compelling by the fact that this reviewer’s family had incidental connections with some of the participants.

Chester’s research, always impressive, verges on the remarkable as he goes on to cover the IRC’s involvement in the East German and Hungarian uprisings of the ‘50s. But he is at his most incisive when he deals with the IRC’s steadily deepening involvement in Vietnam, first as an agency helping the thousands of refugees created by American policies forcing peasants off the land and into guarded enclaves, then as a means of influencing public opinion in favor of the war. Chester also notes, however, that the more sensitive and more sensible supporters of the IRC parted company with the Johnson administration over the president’s escalation of the war.

Early on in his work, however, Chester puts his finger on the central question for progressive members of the IRC—one which they do not seem ever to have considered – when he writes that in the Cold War, “the IRC was *compelled* [italics mine] to find its own niche within the intricate complex of organizations that constituted the covert network.” Who “compelled” them and how? Could they not have made the same decision the author’s own father, a committed socialist, made when he refused to work for the OSS in the ‘40s? If the committee’s work could not be done without covert money and control was it worth doing? Or would it have been better left to an open CIA proprietary? When does compromise become surrender?

— John Gorman

Books for Rebel Workers

One Big Union. by IWW.
The basic introduction to the structure and methods of the Industrial Workers of the World. \$2

The General Strike.
Ralph Chaplin’s musical version of the IWW Preamble notes “without our brain and muscle not a single wheel can turn.” He develops that idea in this essay. \$2

Labor Law for the Rank & Filer. by Staughton Lynd.
Revised and updated, this classic self-help manual is subtitled: “building solidarity while staying clear of the law.” \$7

IWW Organizing Manual (2nd Ed)
A guide to building the IWW on the job. \$5

A New Union Vision
Arthur J. Miller reflects on the need for revolutionary unions today. \$2

IWW Little Red Songbook (36th Edition)
103 labor songs from around the world, with music. Includes classics and new songs by Billy Bragg, Anne Feeney, Charlie King, Utah Phillips, etc. \$10

Rebel Voices.
IWW Songs sung by IU 630 Wobs. Tape \$10.

We Have Fed You All for 1,000 Years.
Utah Phillips sings Wobbly songs. Tape \$10.

Baseball caps \$9
Black globe on red cap, adjustable sizing.

Joe Hill T-shirts
Gray w/ pocket. Front has picture of Joe Hill, back IWW Globe & “Because capitalism cannot be reformed” \$12

IWW Buttons
Fire Your Boss! \$1.

Black Cat/Direct Action, \$1.
IWW Globe circled by motto: “Labor is Entitled to All it Creates.” Black & Red, \$1.50.

Greeting Cards
May Pole cards, featuring workers dancing around a May Pole flying the red flag, are \$5/dozen. The cat knocking over the xmas tree for \$5/dozen. Also a card designed by Joe Hill, 4 color, glossy cover, \$10/dozen.

Solidarity Unionism. by Staughton Lynd.
Critical reading for all who care about the future of the labor movement. \$7

Bumperstickers
Six bumperstickers, each with IWW Globe on left. Slogans: Solidarity Forever, One Big Union, Because Capitalism Cannot Be Reformed, An Injury to One Is an Injury to All, Don’t Mourn Organize, Labor is Entitled to All It Creates. Black on durable white stock, \$1.25 each, post-paid.

Silent Agitators
10 designs to a sheet. 50 cents a sheet, minimum order 4 sheets. Wet and stick.

Labor History

The IWW: Its First 70 Years. Fred Thompson & Pat Murfin, \$14.95

The Centralia Tragedy of 1919: Elmer Smith and the Wobblies by Tom Copeland. \$17.50.

Fellow Worker: The Life of Fred Thompson. Compiled by D. Roediger.
Autobiographical reflections and philosophy from a veteran Wobbly who bridged the generations. \$10

The Great Bisbee Deportation of July 12, 1917
compiled by Rob Hanson. \$2.50

Solidarity Forever—An oral history of the IWW. Steward Bird, Dan Georgakas & Deborah Shaffer, eds.

A compilation of interviews with former and veteran Wobblies. Badly transcribed, but interesting reading. \$11

Memoirs of a Wobbly. by Henry McGuckin.
A rambling Wobbly organizer of the 1910s tells how they hoboed, organized and lived. Free speech fights and “fanning the flames of discontent.” \$5

Rebel Girl, the autobiography of Elizabeth Gurley Flynn. \$9.95.

Working the Waterfront.
Wobbly longshoreman Gilbert Mers tells of 42 years on the Texas waterfront as a rank-and-file radical. Workers’ history as it should be told. Hardcover: \$20

The American Labor Movement: A New Beginning. by Sam Dolgoff.
A veteran IWW organizer traces the history of labor militance and offers his vision for building a new, radical, rank-and-file labor movement. \$5

Strike! by Jeremy Brecher.
A history of U.S. workers’ struggle from workers’ point of view. Argues class upsurges are based in everyday live and rank & file initiative. \$15

Rise and Repression of Radical Labor. by Daniel Fusfeld.
A short history of the U.S. movement from the 1877 strikes through the 1918 red scare trials, deportations and murders. \$5

Sacco and Vanzetti, The Anarchist Background. by Paul Avrich. hardcover, 265 pages, \$15.

Haymarket Scrapbook. ed. by Dave Roediger & Franklin Rosemont. \$15

Beyond the Martyrs, A Social History of Chicago’s Anarchists, 1870-1900. by Bruce C. Nelson.
A social history of Chicago’s anarchists & socialists of the period. \$10.

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An intimate recounting of medical prob-

lems and daily life in the coalfields in the early part of the century. Hardcover, \$10

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The Revolution Within The Revolution, Workers’ Control in Rural Portugal. by Nancy Barneo.
Compelling account of a resurgent, revolutionary agrarian movement during “The Revolution of the Carnations” and its aftermath, \$15.

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Foreword by M. LeSeur, Intro. by Clarence Darrow, Tribute by Debs, Afterword by Fred Thompson. \$15

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Let Us Now Praise Famous Men by Eward Agee & Walker Evans.
Text and photos of 1930s workers. \$9.

The Kid From Hoboken, An Autobiography. Bill Bailey, \$15.

A People Betrayed – November 1918: A German Revolution by Alfred Döblin. \$8.00.

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A Boss is a Boss, Orange or Green:

Unemployed fight back in Northern Ireland

Globally, governments are pressing forward with a corporate neoliberal agenda against working class people in order to maintain an increasingly unsustainable level of year to year growth in profits. In Northern Ireland, like the rest of the United Kingdom (and many other countries around the world), attacks on the unemployed are being pushed. The Job Seekers Allowance, introduced in October 1996, denies basic unemployment benefits to those who fail to meet new stipulations for looking for work and not refusing any employment offered.

Cutting employment security benefits and increasing desperation to force the unemployed into low wage work is a strategy to undermine all wages. As elsewhere, working people of the United Kingdom have organized protests against these policies and I was pleased to join them when I travelled to Belfast last winter.

The situation there, however, is complicated by a long standing civil strife known locally as the "troubles." Expected to boil over in July of this year, they threaten to tear apart along sectarian lines what little working class unity that there is in Northern Ireland. It is crucial as the violence escalates that working people elsewhere better understand the situation so that we may act in accordance with the principle, "an injury to one is an injury to all."

More frequently misunderstood than not, the common oversimplification of the "troubles" by those outside their boundaries is to see the war simply as a struggle against

colonialism in which Catholics are second class citizens fighting to kick an occupying British army out of their country and the Catholic/Protestant conflict is similar to white/black struggle in South Africa or the United States.

This fails to acknowledge that a significant portion of the majority protestant Northern Ireland population are a separate identity group who know themselves as "loyalists," and agree that Ulster (a protestant name for Northern Ireland) is a part of the United Kingdom in the same way that Wales or Scotland are, but definitely do not see themselves as British and are increasingly discontent with the British government. Residents of Northern Ireland with money can buy their way out of the war, and live somewhere safe (at least so far). It is only the working class that is constantly subject to the worst of the miseries. And though unemployment effects Catholics disproportionately it would be callous to say to a working-class protestant, say a resident of the Tiger's Bay housing project in North Belfast, that Catholics are second class citizens. So also is that protestant!

Both the Republican and Loyalist paramilitaries have very similar demands to the government, notably, freedom for all political prisoners. Evidence suggests both Loyalist and Republican paramilitaries are to a greater or lesser extent involved in drug dealing, organized crime, religious bigotry, and control of local communities through coercion. Another point to carefully bring

out when discussing the role of the British government in Northern Ireland is that not only does it have troops there but it pours a huge quantity of money into Northern Ireland to prevent economic collapse and the ensuing disaster this would create. This year, racial terror acts targeting minority residents (in other parts of the world the capitalist press have called this "ethnic cleansing") have been on the increase. Though the motivations of the British government and capitalist industry are hardly noble, a Bosnia or Rwanda-like genocide would be both embarrassing and unprofitable. However, the British government and capitalist industry have set forces in motion that they can no longer reliably control.

There are no easy answers to Northern Ireland and the political situation is more complex than I have presented it here, but for better understanding of the situation, working people need to recognise a boss for a boss, whether that boss is Protestant (traditional color orange) or Catholic (traditional color green).

A boss is a boss, orange or green; Strike and make them pay!

— Michael Reinsborough

From Outdoor Relief to Job Seekers Allowance

The following was adapted from a speech given at a rally against the JSA by Organise! member Jason Brannigan.

*The streets are grimed with dirt,
O dismal town,
The belching smoke adulterates the air,
Foul Poverty stalks along with gloomy frown,
Leaving on many a man his mark of care.
Poor little capital of a puppet state,
Police-controlled and politician-ridden,
And all revolt diverted by the great—
The flag of freedom is no longer hidden.
Some men have lost all fear of hell
damnation,
And strive to make this isle a workers home,
Where social justice is the inspiration,
And not the creeds of Luther or of Rome...*

The poem above was written in memory of those killed and injured during the disturbances of Belfast during the Outdoor Relief Strike. It was October 1932, almost the day of the introduction of the JSA, 64 years ago that Protestant and Catholic workers united across the sectarian divide and confronted the state.

A world recession had hit hard and out of a population of one and a quarter million, 100,000 had seen their jobs disappear. Some 37% of working class families were living in absolute poverty. Many were excluded from benefits by the 'means test' and their

only course of action was to apply to the city 'Guardians' for Outdoor Relief Work.

The Outdoor Relief Workers Committee fought for the abolition of task work, an increase in relief payments, an end to payment in kind, and the extension of Outdoor Relief to single men and to women.

On the 3rd of October, 2000 Outdoor Relief Workers went on strike for these demands. That evening 30,000 people marched through Belfast in support of the strikers. Workers and the unemployed ignored the bigots to fight for their common interests against the ruling classes.

The situation became increasingly tense, confrontations with the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) came to a head when they tried to prevent a march on the 11th of October. The march was banned under the special powers act, the Royal Inniskillen Fusiliers were put on stand by. Thousands of extra police were called in and were issued with rifles...

Sammy Baxter, a Protestant from Regent Street and John Keenan, a Catholic from the Falls, were both shot dead by the RUC. Fifteen more suffered from gunshot wounds — these were mainly Catholics as the RUC, in an attempt to split the workers on sectarian lines confined gunfire to Catholic areas. Nineteen others, mostly protestants, suffered serious injuries caused mainly by police batons. The Stormont government worked hard to split the movement along religious lines, but they also had to compromise.

Strikers won large increases to their relief pay, payment in kind was abolished but relief work was not extended to single men or women.

The lesson for those seeking to build effective opposition to the JSA today is that we can and must unite across the sectarian divide to fight for our real interests. Inot the bosses or the politicians- who create the wealth in this society. They simply steal this wealth from us, and now... Now they want to take away the pittance that is the dole.

We cannot let them get away with this latest attack. Join us in the building of an effective campaign against the JSA. But we should also aim at going on the offensive, taking it a step further. Instead of fighting for crumbs we should take the whole bloody bakery!

LaborTech '97

This year's LaborTech conference (July 11-13) focuses on technological tools in organizing, with workshops on labor struggles on line, multimedia labor education, and on-line solidarity building. Registration is \$125. For info: 415/282-1908, or write PO Box 425584, San Francisco CA 94142. labortech@labornet.org

A splendid job for the bosses

"America's largest companies tallied up a stunning 23.3% increase in profits in 1996, an extraordinary performance in the sixth year of a recovery." — *Fortune* magazine.

What do flowery phrases like this mean to the working class? Well they mean that although real wages are down, benefits are shrinking and jobs are being eliminated, we can pat ourselves on the back for doing such a splendid job for the bosses.

We have tolerated speed-ups and benefit cuts to generate profits for the bosses. How much profit? Here are some figures from Fortune's website (www.fortune.com):

Company	Profit[millions]	No. Employees	Profit per Employee
AT&T	\$5,908.0	130,400	\$45,306
Exxon	\$7,510.0	79,000	\$95,063
Chrysler	\$3,529.0	126,000	\$28,007
Citicorp	\$3,788.0	89,400	\$42,371
Industry	Average profit per Employee		
Temporary Help	\$8,028		
Computers, Office equip.	\$15,638		
Chemicals	\$24,715		
Petroleum refining	\$50,665		

The figures show that workers are providing huge profits for their corporate bosses. And corporations would like to raise their profit per employee to even higher levels. Case in point. General Electric, whose profits last year were \$7.280 billion, with 239,000 employees, for an averaged profit of \$30,460 per employee. GE has taken a highly adversarial stance in the opening rounds contract negotiations with its union workforce.

John F. "Jack" Welch, GE's CEO, was quoted in *Business Week* (March 24) speaking in January to a meeting of GE managers, "You better get prepared like you've never been prepared...to operate in a strike and not flinch." This was three months before negotiations started. At the same meeting Welch blasted demands for job security as "crazy demands that are noncompetitive" and expressed his feelings on full pensions after 30 years "why should we send a 47- or 48-year-old experienced employee home ... and pay them not to work?"

GE has steadily been reducing the number of its union workers for years by outsourcing and moving operations to nonunion areas, both in the U.S. and offshore.

It would appear GE plans to continue its union busting by forcing a strike which management will draw out as long as possible, allowing them to hire and train a scab workforce. Perhaps rather than making union busting easy for management with an out-and-out strike, workers would be better served by staying on the job and using slowdowns, work-to-rule, sick-ins and other direct action tactics to better their lot.

— Tom Johnson, X346299

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To Join mail this form with a check or money order for initiation and first month's due to IWW, 103 West Michigan Ave., Ypsilanti MI 48197, or contact your local delegate. **Dues:** Monthly income under \$800: \$5 per month; Income \$1,000-2,000: \$10 monthly; Over \$2,000: Dues \$15. Initiation Fee is same as one month's dues. A low-income worker can join for as little as \$10.00

☐ I affirm that I am a worker, and that I am not an employer.
☐ I agree to abide by the IWW constitution and regulations.
☐ I will study its principles and make myself acquainted with its purposes.
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